

Welcome to
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DOIN -O- SAUR



B. WARE

DON-o-SAUR 57

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An Exercise in Apologetics

"DON-o-SAUR is very interesting," a friend told me during the annual DASFA Winter Solstice Orgy at our house the third Saturday in December. "It's... uh, different, not much like most other fanzines I've seen. But, well... hey, I really like it. Don't take this wrong. I may be saying something I shouldn't..."

"Say it," I dared him.

"Well, it seems sort of ... heavy. You know what I mean?"

"I don't think so."

"You know--heavy. Like... heavy? I dunno, it just seemed to me that the last couple of issues were kind of gloom and doom all the way through. Like heavy, man. I thought it would be nice if there was more ... oh, I don't know. If it could be lighter. You know, looking more on the bright side of things? I have a strong feeling I shouldn't be saying all this."

"Of course you should be," I assured him. "But write me a loc. Be specific. Give me examples of what you think is too heavy and how to lighten things up. DON-o-SAUR lives on locs, you know. They kind of set the tone of the whole zine."

He promised a loc.

I hope my friend didn't feel that I was brushing him off or that I resented his comments. I honestly did not. I deeply appreciated them, and I most certainly will publish his loc if it materializes.

This is not an unintelligent man, you understand, or even an inarticulate one. He has a much more varied and flexible vocabulary than I've given him credit for in this snippet of dialogue. He's an imaginative, creative, personable and knowledge-able individual. Some of my friends are capable of incoherence on occasion, but I have no stupid friends. Most are a lot smarter than I am, or at least more talented and accomplished. I don't associate with dolts.

But I found the "heavy" comment especially interesting, coming from the author of a brilliant but chilling horror story (as yet unpublished) about a man who pierces his skin with nails and needles in order to gain the power of bad metal, and who does very unpleasant things with that power. Great story, but ... I was thinking, *DON-O-SAUR* is heavy?

Okay, never mind that for the moment.

I received another interesting comment on another occasion from another of my interesting friends, this one not generally familiar with the science fiction subculture or with the conventions of fanzine publishing. She was referring, I think, not just to DoS specifically but to other examples of my fanwriting that I've passed on to her from time to time.

"It's certainly not what I would have expected from you. I mean, knowing your background in newspaper work, and you being a college professor, I guess I expected something more journalistic, more formal... more serious. You know what I mean? Something maybe not so very personal, and sometimes so ...well..."

"Frothy?" I suggested.

"Well... Don't get me wrong. I like it. It's very... interesting..."

I'm not quite sure that I understood precisely what she was driving at, and I'm afraid I can't expect this lady to express her views more exactly and at greater length in a loc, although I'll keep prodding her for one.

My goal in life, you know, has never been to produce a universally popular fanzine. At one time I may have thought it possible to please everyone in everything I did, but I've sobered up since then, and I'm content now if I can please myself once in a while.

Still and all, I want it known that I welcome criticism and that I can actually be responsive to it, if it makes sense to me. Often enough it does.

Consider the example of the horizontal format of DoS 56.

One of the earliest reactions I got to that was from Robert Bloch. He'd been Guest of Honor, along with Forry Ackerman, at MileHiCon 21 in October. I wrote a sort of interview story on Bloch for *Blood Review* and sent him the first draft, along with a copy of DoS 56 which I wasn't able to finish in time for the con. Bloch approved the interview story, with minor corrections and deletions, but his only comment on DoS was that the layout and typeface prevented him from reading much of it.

And not long after that, there was Roy Tackett's letter in which he seemed to see DoS 56 as another baffling manifestation of Quantum Mechanics.

A number of other readers mentioned that they didn't care much for either the layout or the typeface.

The comment that really got the point across to me was Mike Glicksohn's, and I'm going to quote that segment of his loc here:

It's always a delight to receive a new issue of D-o-S because one knows one is in for a stimulating, amusing and interesting reading experience. But... I must say it is not so much of a delight to get a DoS that is designed the way #56 is. I didn't like the side-stapled format when Jerry Lapidus used it on TOMORROW AND... in the early '70s, I didn't like it when RUNE tried an issue like that a few years back, and I haven't liked it the half dozen other times various faneds have tried it before recognizing that it is ugly and awkward and interferes with communication (one of the rationales behind fanzines, supposedly.) I know my opinion won't change your mind (and it shouldn't) but I couldn't pass up the opportunity to at least try to tell you that THIS IS ONE DUMB WAY OF PUBLISHING A FANZINE!! Thank you, and now back to our regularly scheduled loc...

One of the many things I love about Mike is that he does communicate clearly. You never have to guess at the point he's trying to get across.

I'll take this opportunity to assure Mike and all others who expressed any degree of displeasure at the format of DoS 56 that it probably will not happen again. In the same breath I must assert that it isn't their disapproval that steers me away from repeating the experiment. I had decided even before the issue was ready to print that never again would I subject myself to the ordeal that the production of issue 56 proved to be.

Perhaps I should explain why I decided on the landscape layout; that's the easy part. I had that stunning piece of artwork from Brian Cooper, which I knew I wanted to use as a cover; but I refused to crop it or reduce it, and I couldn't see any other way to use it as a vertical illo. So I changed the layout of the whole zine to accommodate the cover ...and started regretting it almost from the beginning, despite my initial high hopes.

See, I had just acquired WordPerfect 5.0 and was eager to try out its narrow column capability. I assumed it would be a simple matter to widen the columns just a smidgen, shorten the page length and do the whole thing on my regular printer, with no complications.

Well, I knew I should have paid the extra \$100 or so for a wide-carriage printer when I bought the computer.

On a narrow carriage printer, you can't do the landscape layout that WP5 is capable of. I did it anyway; I can be pretty stubborn. I used the shorter page length (no real problem there, except that it required two or three days of trial and error futzing to determine exactly what that page length had to be), widened the columns as much as possible, which isn't much, and took two or three more days of trial and error futzing, and used a smaller typeface in

order to get as much wordage per page as I could have with 8½X11 layout. Then each computer page had to be pasted on an 11X8½ sheet and enlarged on the copier to 112% (a figure arrived at by trial and error futzing) to make it look like it belonged on a horizontal sheet.

Never again.

Well... unless I happen to acquire a wide-body printer sometime or happen to be given an irresistible piece of art that cannot be used vertically.

My point here is that I am open to criticism; I welcome it, and I'm responsive to it, especially when I've decided in advance that the criticism is valid--and sometimes even when I don't quite understand the basis of the negativity.

So, when my readers tell me that *DON-o-SAUR* contains too much gloom and doom (or not enough) or too much froth and frivolity (or not enough), or is not journalistic enough (or is too staid and "heavy")... well, I think about such remarks. You might say I brood about them.

In the quietest hours of the night, between 2 and 5 a.m., I'm awake, night after night, staring at the computer screen, plotting ways to integrate all the diverse reactions to my work into one perfect product--one that will totally please me and (just incidentally) everyone else who reads it.

Thus far, I admit, I haven't seen even a viable approach to the problem. Or maybe I do. How can I tell until I try a few things? A few topics are tickling my mind, teasing me to write about them, so I might as well start with them and see where things go, striving constantly for a balance between gloom, doom, froth, frivolity (the "light" touch), and journalistic responsibility.

Notes for an open letter

to Isaac Asimov

Does everybody here read *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*, at least occasionally? Raise your hand if you don't. Never mind whether you subscribe or not. I know non-subscribers who read every issue cover to cover; and I'm one of those subscribers who thumb through each issue, reading only the Editorial, the letters, the book column and, rarely, rarely one of the stories.

Sometimes I skip the book column (Spinrad can be such a jerk) and maybe read only a few of the letters. Always, I read the Editorial. I'd hate to think that the editorials are the only reason I get the magazine. I mean, they're worth reading, usually. I don't think I'm wasting my time with them. But after all, it's the fiction that keeps winning Hugos and Nebulas. I sometimes feel I should read more of that and let the Editorials wait.

Well, I don't apologize. I am a longtime fan of Asimov--and I mean long time. I loved the Robot stories and especially what came to be known as the Foundation series when I was reading them in *Astounding* in the early '40s. When he started writing books, I read his books, both fiction and non-fiction, both science and non-science. Most of my understanding of chemistry, physics, ecology and astronomy comes from reading Asimov's explanations. I keep close at hand and make frequent reference to *Asimov's Guide to the Bible* and *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. (Even though Carolyn has caught him in a number of outright errors in *Shakespeare*.)

I passed on *Asimov's Annotated Don Juan*, but I have an order in for his *Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*. I have only one of his Limerick books done with John Ciardi and don't feel that I really need the other one. I was enthralled by his autobiographical volumes. I haven't tallied the total of

Isaac Asimov books I own. Probably not even a fourth as many as he's written, but still it's a fair number.

Like everyone who knows anything at all about him, I stand in awe of his productivity. I find it difficult to comprehend how any mortal can write even two or three books a year, to say nothing of the 10 or 12 that Asimov has averaged over the past four decades.

I like Asimov. My respect and admiration for him as a scholar and teacher and story teller are unbounded. Moreover, I admire, respect and generally agree with his stands on social, political and religious issues. He gives me the courage to still call myself a liberal and a rationalist. I admire his calm, cool, rational, dispassionate approach to any controversial subject.

Usually.

It is seldom indeed that I disagree with Asimov on any significant issue. So seldom that when it happens I feel like I've got to do something about it. At the very least I must try to understand the source of the disagreement. Something like cognitive dissonance takes place. I'm out of balance somehow. I have to write something to restore equilibrium to the universe.

The issue here is rock music. Asimov doesn't like it and has said so rather emphatically. In recent issues he has vehemently defended his right to not like any kind of music (or art or architecture or films or books or whatever) that he is damn well inclined to not like. It isn't clear who is disputing that point with him. He has quoted from and paraphrased certain letters that he says constitute attacks on his ability to make artistic judgments for himself. If the letters have been printed in toto in the letter column, I've missed them.

In reading the editorials, certain questions have nagged at me:

Why should I be disturbed about Asimov not liking rock music? Why should anyone? Did someone really write to Asimov saying that because he--the letter writer--knew a lot more about music than Asimov, then Asimov had no right to express his own opinion? If so, then of course the letter writer deserved the kind of stomping that Asimov gave him. But I can't help wishing I'd seen the entire text of that letter. Why did Asimov not print it, along with the name of the writer? What are Asimov's objections to rock music, anyway? Why does he seem so upset at the efforts of his readers to try to explain to him what rock music is all about? And why are so many readers apparently getting on him about his reaction to rock?

Surely the issue is not simply one of trying to impose one's own tastes on someone else? I give Asimov's readers credit for more intelligence (and liberality) than that, even if he doesn't.

What's the underlying issue here?

I'd better back up to my first question: Why am I disturbed by Asimov's distaste for rock? Am I, even? Well, yeah, a little, apparently. Not much. Not enough to get emotional about, but enough to give me that feeling of cognitive dissonance. It's as though I somehow feel that Asimov should like rock.

Why? Well, that's the tough one, and to begin answering that, I'll have to explain a little about my own attitude toward rock 'n' roll and how I arrived at it. Basically, I like rock; and I hope it's understood that when I say that I don't mean I like ALL rock 'n' roll music (any more than I like ALL science fiction or ALL fantasy) or that that's the ONLY kind of music I like. But rock was the first music that appealed to me on a deeper (more primitive?) level than the cerebral, the aesthetic or the merely sentimental. It was the first music that evoked a physical, visceral response in me, that compelled me to move with it. It was also the first music that grabbed me right between the legs.

I'm not quite as old as Asimov, but I'm a lot closer to his generation of music listeners than I am to the vast majority of rock music followers, and I'm more or less familiar with the music of our generation--mine and Ike's. I suspect (but I could be wrong) that I listened to (or heard) a little more popular music of the time than Asimov did; I don't recall him saying that his father's candy store ever had a radio or juke box. Either would have been considered an obscene luxury by Papa Asimov.

I was 8 or 9 years old before my parents got their first radio (they never, ever, owned a record player), and I don't recall spending much time before that listening to anyone else's, and I don't suppose I spent any more time than young Asimov did in hanging around juke joints. Neither of us could have been to any appreciable degree music oriented in early youth.

My parents had no particular interest in music and no talent for it. Both of them liked the Grand Ol' Opry, and my mother knew (and could hum but seldom sang) some of the more often heard Baptist hymns. There were individuals on both sides of the family who could sing and play the guitar and banjo, and I have some recollections of family gatherings in Virginia that included some music. Not many such occasions.

Music was nowhere near as prevalent in the 1930s as it has been since. Not everyone had a radio; not everyone had a car, and not all cars had radios. Record players were bulky, cumbersome and expensive; and the wax discs were extremely breakable. Home music (other than homemade) was a status symbol, available only to the well-to-do; and those sounds emerging from the bars in Laramie were as likely to be from live musicians as from juke boxes.

Sure, there were live concerts, including free ones in the park for the unwashed masses, but I don't remember attending any until after I was grown up (and washed a little more often).

Most of the music I heard was in the movies. (And it occurs to me as I write that the reason film musicals were so popular was that they were the source of musical culture for the vast majority of the populace. That and the jukeboxes and, increasingly, radio.)

I wasn't crazy about the music I grew up with. I don't mean I detested it or that it was painful to listen to. I could whistle some of the popular tunes and I knew what was number one on The Hit Parade (I can almost remember how long "Deep Purple" stayed at the head of the list, but that must have been in the '40s.) I got so I knew the names of some of the top songwriters--Hoagy Carmichael, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, the Gershwins... I had nothing against them, and I came to appreciate them more as I grew older, and I certainly do not dispute their greatness now. But I was never really *in love* with them.

Not passionately, I mean. I hope I can make my meaning clearer when I start talking about rock music.

I knew the names of some of the popular Big Band leaders of the '30s and '40s--Woody Herman, Tommy Dorsey (and Jimmy), Glen Miller, Harry James, Artie Shaw, Skitch Henderson, Benny Goodman, Sammy Kaye... I'm amazed at how many of the names I remember, as inconsequential as they seemed to me at the time. They were okay, but I was never in love with any of them either, and I'm unable to work up any feelings of nostalgia for the Big Band Era.

When our first radio was in its early years, I became almost as much a fan of the Grand Ol' Opry as my parents were. But that was the only kind of music they could listen to with any enjoyment, and it soon palled on me. When I had a chance (not often) to "play the radio" for myself, I would explore the dial, searching the frequencies for something that appealed to me.

That must be how I discovered symphonic music, and operatic, although I recall seeing the 1936 film version of "The Mikado" with my older sister, and being both amused and mightily puzzled by it. Much later, in my high school

years, I heard a radio presentation of "The Mikado" and was delighted not just by the music and lyrics but by the deliciously clever dialogue. That's when I first fell in love with Gilbert and Sullivan.

It wasn't until I was in the Army, oddly enough, that I was able to spend hours at a time listening to music. It didn't take me long to discover that USO clubs had music libraries, with albums of classical and semi-classical music that I'd heard of but had never listened to. Those albums were my first exposure to "Porgy and Bess" and "An American in Paris" and "Carmen" and the symphonies of Beethoven and Schubert and Tchaikovsky and many others--including just a tantalizing taste of more Gilbert and Sullivan.

My first major purchases with my Army discharge pay (following a get-drunk celebration with my Yugoslav buddy, Johnny Koshak), were a portable typewriter and three record albums (78 rpm's of course; that's all that exist-ed). The albums were "The Mikado," "HMS Pinafore" and Nelson Eddy singing patter songs from Gilbert & Sullivan.

It was at least six months after my discharge before I finally bought a record player on which to play the albums. It was a major investment, and it wasn't even a very good phonograph, but I gradually upgraded the equipment over the years as the technology improved and prices declined. (But no, I have not yet made the Great Leap Forward to CDs, and I am saddened by the sudden and almost total disappearance of vinyl.)

Meeting and subsequently marrying Carolyn did much to accelerate my musical education. She had grown up in a university atmosphere and was accustomed to attending performances of symphony orchestras and university presentations of musicals and pop concerts. Moreover, she was taking dance classes and had developed a special fondness for ballet music. I was almost grateful to Carolyn for not having any special musical talent. Her father was a Barbershop Quartet singer, but Carolyn, though she appreciated good music, could come no closer to carrying a tune than I could. So I didn't feel totally inferior to her.

Most of the records I purchased during the '50s were either classical (or semi-) or the albums of such Broadway musicals as "Kiss Me, Kate!" "South Pacific," "The Pajama Game," etc.--or children's songs. I was proud and determined that my kids would not have to grow up without easy access to a record player.

Carolyn and I have had a radio during our entire married life, but neither of us listened to it much, especially in the early years. Carolyn still doesn't, and my only radio-listening now is while I'm working at the word processor; I slip on the headphones and tune to the rock stations. If there's too much mindless chatter and too little music, I'll slip in a Dylan or John Cougar Mellencamp or Queen or Stevie Nicks or Emmylou Harris tape. I think it's interesting that most of the local rock music programs that are aired during my listening hours are "oldies shows." I find it difficult to keep up with the newer stuff.

During the '50s, I had no interest at all in popular music. I remember a co-worker at the *Telegraph-Herald* in 1955 or '56 asking me what I thought of the new "rhythm and blues" music. I had to confess total ignorance. That same co-worker was a jazz fan and tried to spark some enthusiasm in me for that kind of music. He was loaned me some of his albums, which I listened to attentively but on the whole unresponsively. Jazz simply didn't seem to do anything to me. Still doesn't.

I missed out on the birth trauma of rock 'n' roll. I may have heard the names Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis, but they didn't quite register on my consciousness. There was no escaping Elvis, of course, but I dismissed him as a fad, a novelty, and tried to ignore him, and I never have acquired an appre-

ciation of Presley's contribution to modern music. (What I'm saying is that I still cannot listen to him comfortably; and I don't even know why.) However, I thought it was mean and stupid of Sheriff Scotty, the host of a Denver TV show for kids in the late '50s, to warn his viewers against the evils of Elvis-the-Pelvis.

I was editing news stories and opinion pieces in the *Rocky Mountain News* about rock 'n' roll (deciding how to spell it was a major policy issue for the copy desk) long before I had any clear idea of what it was. It was clear that something exciting (and quite upsetting for some folks) was going on in the pop music world, but I certainly didn't expect to be caught up in it.

In the early '60s, I had a car with a working radio in it. Most of the cars I've owned have not had radios--definitely not if I had to pay anything extra for them. I've never cared for the distraction of chatter or music while I'm trying to concentrate on staying alive on the highway. But this one car did have a radio, and though it was off most of the time, I would occasionally turn it on when I was driving home from work late at night, when I had the streets practically to myself.

It was the radio of that car that first imparted to me the physical knowledge of rock 'n' roll's sexuality. I have no recollection of what the song was, or by which group--it could very well have been something like "Rock Around the Clock," I suppose. It was something basic, primal, harsh, insistent, throbbing, with a rhythm that, before I was aware of what was happening, had my entire body twitching and throbbing in response to it. One particular part of my body seemed especially responsive. The feeling had started in the pit of my stomach but quickly slid lower. It was weird. Very interesting. Nothing quite like that had ever happened to me before. It wasn't the last time, but it was not a consistent experience. Not every rock 'n' roll number affected me that way, and the more I listened to rock music, waiting and hoping for the sexual stimulation, the more other things in the music I found to notice and appreciate.

The car radio could carry my rock education only so far. Not many stations played rock music, and anyway that car soon gave out and the next one I got was not similarly equipped.

Fortunately, about that time, Paul Lilly, a *Rocky Mountain News* copy desk veteran, maneuvered himself into the enviable assignment of writing a weekly record review column (while still performing his copy editing chores, of course). I don't know what the previous record reviewer did with all the free albums he received. Paul kept the ones he reviewed and perhaps a few others, and put the others out for grabs, timing the display so the copy desk workers would usually have first choice.

I picked up a few items that had been scorned by the jazz and swing enthusiasts on the copy desk: "The Fugs," a couple of Grateful Dead albums, an H.P. Lovecraft (how could I possibly resist that?), "Happy Jack" by the Who--plus a lot of undistinguished and unremembered junk. I was tickled by the satiric audacity of the Fugs and the bizarre but lighthearted humor in the Who's "Boris the Spider" and "Cobwebs and Strange" and "Whiskey Man." Among the freebies, I found nothing by the Beatles or the Rolling Stones or the Byrds or Elvis Presley. They were snatched up, I guess, by employees with teenage kids.

My own kids, at this time, were not quite teenagers. Bruce was about 12, Claudia 10, and Doug only 4. It never occurred to me to NOT let them listen to the albums I brought home, even though some of them did contain sexually suggestive material. We enjoyed them together (or suffered through some of them, as the case might be). Partly at the encouragement of the kids, I began buying albums to help fill in the gaps in my rock music education. I also began

reading some of the rock magazines and books. I read a book about Bob Dylan, I think, before I ever heard a Dylan record.

I was frankly bewildered upon first hearing Dylan; there's no way to describe that voice or to prepare anyone for the experience of first hearing him. And I'd made the mistake of buying his first album first; the lines that struck me most were from "Talkin' New York"--"You sound like a hillbilly; we want folk singers here." I think maybe I was expecting a more robust voice, even if raspy--something like Frankie Laine (of "Ghost Riders in the Sky" and "Mule Train" fame). Years later, when I first heard Rod Stewart, I realized that he is what I had sort of expected Bob Dylan to sound like.

I partly made up for the "Bob Dylan" album by finding a Joan Baez album of Dylan songs, and one of Odetta singing Dylan. I was impressed enough by such numbers as "Farewell, Angelina," "Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall" and "Mr. Tambourine Man" that I sought out the albums of Dylan singing the songs I liked. I think I now have ALL of Dylan's albums, having become fully reconciled fairly early to the way he sounds; though one of the great disappointments of my 25-year pursuit is that I've never found a rendition of Dylan himself singing "Farewell, Angelina." Apparently he wrote that just for Joan Baez and if anyone else has ever recorded it, I don't know about it.

Rock music in general and Bob Dylan in particular marked the first sharp divergence between my musical tastes and Carolyn's. She loved Joan Baez and liked Odetta but couldn't stand Dylan singing his own songs. She was fond of Simon and Garfunkle, who came along not long afterwards, and Peter, Paul and Mary, and other folk-style singers but responded with less than total enthusiasm to the Byrds, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Who, Three Dog Night, Iron Butterfly, Led Zeppelin, etc.

The kids and I (Bruce especially, and later Doug) inflicted quite a bit of that kind of music on Carolyn for a number of years. Our first stereo system was set up in the living room, and anyone wanting to play recorded music had to do it there. I don't remember when Bruce got a pair of headphones, or even when I moved the family stereo into my room and got the kids their own, less expensive systems. Not early enough to spare Carolyn hours and hours of exposure to rock music.

I certainly can't accuse her of not having listened to enough rock music to know whether she likes it or not. She has listened, with far more patience and tolerance than many parents of our generation can claim, and she's concluded that she doesn't like it, and that's it. Period. No point arguing with her about it; I have long since abandoned any attempt to alter her tastes. Her conclusive argument is that she knows better than anyone else possibly can what her own ears find pleasurable.

Asimov's point, exactly. I'm not arguing with him; and it doesn't even matter whether he's listened to as much rock music as Carolyn has (or more).

Still, I can't help being disappointed by Carolyn's and Asimov's dislike of rock, and I'm still trying to explain why I'm disappointed--but I also can't help noticing that I still haven't even explained why I like it.

Maybe it's impossible, but I'm going to have one more go at it:

I did make the point that I was first drawn to rock music because I found some of it sexually stimulating. That was important; it was the first music that had affected me that way. Even though I had associated other kinds of music with erotic experiences, it wasn't the music that was the primary stimulus; it was the presence of a certain companion, or (too often) alcohol, or the party atmosphere. Certain rock numbers, all by themselves, in a totally non-erotic and non-alcoholic setting, were capable of arousing a sexual response in me. (And yes, of course I was aware that it was precisely that capability that terrified so many other parents of my generation; I'm afraid I

had little sympathy for those who expressed such terror to me. I could not and still can't understand why they reacted so negatively to intimations of sexuality in their offspring. How could they have forgotten so soon how those offspring sprang into existence? But never mind. No point arguing with them, either.)

If the sexual element had been all I found in rock, it couldn't have held my attention for as long as it has--some 25 years now. After all, my interest in sex has diminished in that time; my devotion to rock music has grown.

So obviously there's more.

It was the words, I'm sure, and the sorts of things that the rock lyrics referred to, that next attracted me, even before the novelty of that throbbing rock beat had worn off. I had grown up with Tin Pan Alley songs that spoke of Full Moon and Empty Arms and Red Sails in the Sunset and Cigareets and Whusky and Wild, Wild Women: either sentimentality or silliness. I liked some of the sentimentality. I was no more immune to "Stardust" than anyone else at the time, and I was moved by "Deep Purple" and "Laura" (my sister was named Laura; I had to like "Laura") and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and "Some Enchanted Evening;" though by the late '40s and early '50s I had come to prefer the more sophisticated (cynical?) numbers of Cole Porter--especially things like "Wunderbar" and "I've Come to Wive It Wealthily in Padua" and "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" from "Kiss Me, Kate!"

None of the popular pre-rock music that I was familiar with dealt overtly with sex. (Well, there was something called "Love for Sale" that was banned from the radio, and it was possible to hear "risque" jazz numbers in certain nightclubs, but I didn't frequent that kind of nightclub, and not being a jazz enthusiast, I wasn't buying the records that might have had sexual content.

Little or none of the music of my time grappled with any form of social injustice. There was "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught" in "South Pacific," but other than that, what? Maybe you can think of some; I can't.

Until Bob Dylan started writing and singing about Masters of War and Hollis Brown and Hattie Carroll and about being Only a Pawn in Their Game and how The Times They Are A-Changing, such themes were practically unheard and unheard of in music. No, no, of course that isn't true. There was folk music, which I recall Joe Langland, my creative writing instructor at the University of Wyoming tried to get his students interested in; I was sorry, but it just didn't appeal to me at all.

Nor was there anything like the nightmare imagery of "Baby Blue" and "Hard Rain" and "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Desolation Row" and "Farewell Angelina"-- "See the cross-eyed pirates sitting/ perched in the sun/ Shooting tin cans/ with a sawed-off shotgun..." -- until Dylan showed how it could be done.

I was surprised and delighted, too, by Dylan's (and his imitators') approach to traditional sentimental themes. "Go 'way from my window/ Leave at your own chosen speed./ I'm not the one you want, babe,/ I'm not the one you need" was not exactly the sort of thing you heard from Perry Como or Frank Sinatra or Dean Martin. I loved it.

I loved the realization that popular music had somehow burst free from all the old restrictions on subject matter and theme--that virtually anything, any idea, any concept, any conceit, any flight of poetic wildness--could be put to music now, including the science fictional and fantasy themes and ideas that were such an important part of my life.

And of course the finishing touch was the very sound of the music, which had also burst the traditional constraints. The music I was accustomed to, and most appreciated, was either symphonic, with its predominance of strings and woodwinds, or popular: the big band sound of trumpets and trombones, with violins, piano and percussion sort of in the background. I was less apprec-

iative of the country-western sound of guitars and banjos and twangy voices. I think there might have been some experimentation with electronic instruments in the classical field, but I wasn't familiar with it. Rock music was my introduction to the concept of electric guitars and synthesizers that could create sounds I'd never even imagined before. I confess that I had trouble at first even identifying some of it as music. It took some getting used to, as did the idea of putting the tom-tom beat of African rhythms right into the forefront of the music that blended piano and wind with the sizzle of static electricity.

To me, rock music sounded very strange. Alien. Extraterrestrial.

You see what I'm saying?

I had no trouble equating rock music with science fiction. It was the music of exploration and adventure and new experiences. For me, it opened new and enormously exciting worlds of music. It took me away from the mundane and ordinary, just as science fiction did. Of course I loved it. Still do.

How can any lover of science fiction NOT at least like rock!?

Well, clearly not all fans (or pros) do, and I think I now know why. It has come to me while I've been writing this.

Rock music does have strong elements of the wild, irrational, savage, primitive. Sometimes it seems out of control, chaotic, lost in realms of zaniness and insanity, so far divorced from the real and ordinary that it can be downright frightening, in the same way that LSD delusions (obviously the inspiration of certain rock numbers) can be frightening.

Isaac Asimov is a strict rationalist. So is Carolyn. So are a good many readers of DON-o-SAUR. I won't say that rock music scares them, but I'm enough of a rationalist myself to understand why they're more comfortable with the kinds of music (and the kinds of science fiction) that are more orderly and controlled, familiar and understandable, more graspable. More rational.

Me, I'm a rationalist sometimes. All in all, having had some experience with both, I prefer sanity to insanity. I have learned the hard way to prefer being sober to being drunk. As a sort of corollary, I have come to prefer the SF of Asimov to that of Harlan Ellison, for example. Mostly. In general. Sometimes.

However... I retain a taste for the horror fiction of Clive Barker and Stephen King and Peter Straub, and even H.P. Lovecraft, some of which I have to consider science fiction (not that I care whether it is or not.) I have a fondness for the bizarre, the strange, the mysterious, the unexplainable, the irrational. Understand, I do not believe in the supernatural; but I am convinced that there's a good deal more to nature than we perceive with our raw senses. I enjoy contemplating, with no hope of comprehending, the mysteries.

I love to indulge my sense of wonder, and sometimes the bare facts of science don't quite arouse it, though the frontiers of scientific speculation certainly do. Such stuff as quantum mechanics, with its possibility of alternate universes, really appeals to me.

Rock music arouses my sense of wonder more than do the symphonies of Beethoven or the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, though I still love Beethoven and G&S.

I have come to believe that there's room in the world of literature for an enormous range of themes and moods, styles and approaches.

There's room in the world of music for both Bach and rock. (I was astounded at how far out Bach sounded when "switched on.")

It saddens me that Asimov doesn't like rock, and I have one final reason for my regret, other than the ones I've mentioned:

I'd love to read Asimov's Guide to Rock.

Gloom and Doom Section



Chief Concerns

In May 1989, Jay was promoted to Editor of the *News*, and he's already busy putting his imprint on Denver's leading daily. Making sure it all runs smoothly, from the front desk to the front page. Along with an award-winning career as editor and reporter, Jay's been an avid crusader for literacy. He's

Jay Ambrose

on the American Society of Newspaper Editors' board and has been a Pulitzer Prize juror for the past two years. What about away from work? Jay's a fanatic about college basketball, the outdoors, reading and collecting books. You could say he's as well-rounded as our paper.

Rocky Mountain News

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS TV DIAL — Dec. 17, 1989 — 49

Time to reign in medical excesses

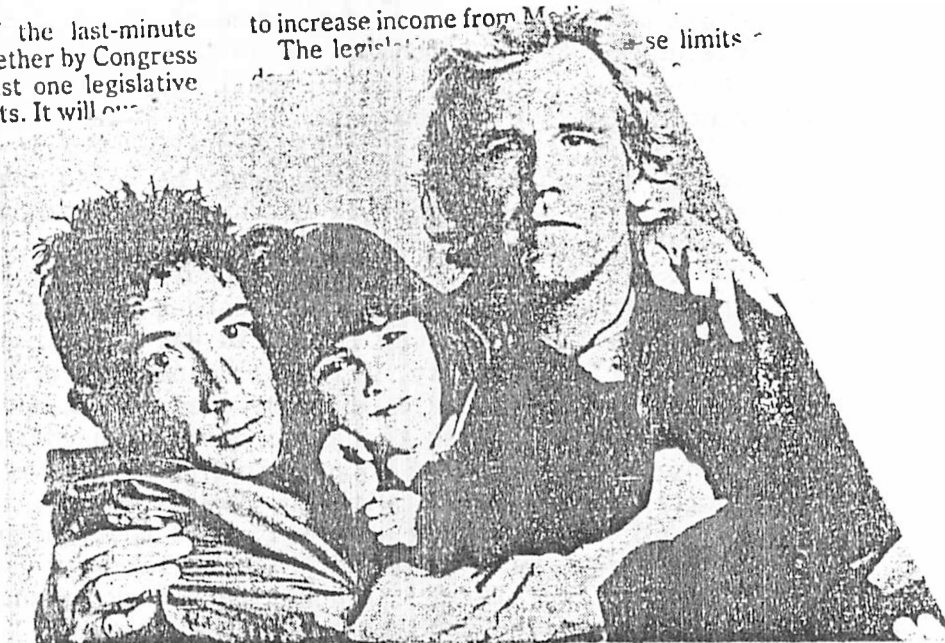
AMONG the smoke and mirrors of the last-minute deficit-reduction package cobbled together by Congress and the Bush administration lies at least one legislative initiative that may produce lasting benefits. It will overhaul Medicare's system of doctors fees.

One aim is to control the soaring cost of medical services. Another is to close the wide disparity between the fees paid to specialists and general practitioners.

The new payment schedule would eliminate the practice of paying doctors on the basis of "prevailing and reasonable" fees. In its place, a fee schedule based largely on the actual time doctors devote to each patient.

In general, high-income specialists will see their fees cut, while family

physicians will see limits on their income to increase income from Medicare. The legislation also sets limits on the number of Medicare patients a doctor can treat.



Three Fugitives A paroled crook's plans to go 'straight' go sour when he becomes involved with an inept bank robber and his six-year-old daughter. A funny, heart-warming comedy starring Nick Nolte and Martin Short.

Literacy crusade
recruits needed

42 Ventura Publisher Turns 3.0

The introduction of version 3.0 lets us peak into Ventura's future—and with it, the future of desktop publishing in general.

A TALE OF TWO GUNS

A disarmament story without a moral

After my mother died in 1985, my father disposed, as quickly as he gracefully could, of the .32 Smith & Wesson revolver that she had kept in a drawer of a bedside table (unloaded, for the most part, I think) for more than 60 years. I had never known where the pistol had come from, but my father remembered. It was from someone in the Duty family, and Daddy had kept track in his mind of exactly which descendant the gun rightfully belonged to.

"I always hated having that thing around," he confided to me after he'd gotten rid of it. "But your ma insisted it made her feel safer."

To the best of my knowledge, my father never once in his life fired that pistol. I know that my mother did, because I was a witness, as a 5-year-old, when she shot the pig in our yard in Virginia that my parents spent the rest of the day scalding and butchering. I suspect it was that pig that got us through a winter. And I remember hearing my mother tell of other occasions when she'd shot varmints raiding the hen house. She spoke proudly of her marksmanship, and my father willingly granted her the title.

I hadn't realized that my father had such a deep aversion to firearms, though I'd had little hints, even other than his refusal to touch the Smith & Wesson. When I was a junior in high school, approaching my 18th birthday, I guess my father noticed that some of my friends had been given .22 pistols or rifles for their birthdays or as Christmas presents. Perhaps he assumed that I wanted one, though I don't recall expressing a desire for one, at least not since age 12 or thereabouts.

Anyway, he apologetically explained why he wasn't giving me a gun or rifle for my birthday. "You'll probably be going into the Army after you get out of school," he said. "They'll teach you everything you'll ever want to know about guns."

I didn't argue, and he was absolutely right on that point, more correct than he could have known. (My father never served in the military; he was just a little too young for World War I and the wrong age, as well as being in an essential industry, for WWII. I never heard him express any deep regrets.)

I was never afraid of guns, even as a kid. That Smith & Wesson was a familiar sight, even though no one ever used it. Well, though, I used it; I mean, I was permitted to play with it. I have a picture of myself in cowboy attire, about age 12, with the S&W on my hip, in its original holster. It kind of shocks me now when I look at that photo. How could my parents be sure that the gun wasn't loaded? The bullets, as I recall, were kept in the same drawer as the pistol. I don't recall my parents checking the gun to be sure it wasn't loaded each time I belted it on.

I recall at least one earlier time, when I couldn't have been more than 7 or 8, when I was in the house for a while all by myself and poking around looking for some mischief to get into. I remember sitting on my parents' bed and putting bullets into the gun and then shaking them out and twirling the cylinder and snapping it back in and pointing the gun at imaginary targets and pulling the trigger.

At one point, meditating on the actual purpose of the weapon, I put the barrel to my head, wondering what death would be like. I guess it's obvious that I either didn't pull the trigger or if I did it fell on an empty chamber. I never told anyone about that. Not until now.

The first thing the Army taught me about firearms was the difference between a gun and a rifle. There were gross-out stories about how the Marines got the point across, but Army instructors simply explained the difference once, and after that anyone overheard referring to their M-1 as a "gun" was sent to dig a ditch or run a few laps around the drill area. The M-1 was a heavy sonof-a-bitch, useful for building muscles as you run through the Queen Anne Drill (is that really what it's called--the "right shoulder arms, left shoulder arms, present arms" routine? Why do I remember that?)--but of dubious utility to an ordinary human being on the firing range. I never learned how to hit the target; hell, I never learned how to keep the f__in' thing from jamming, though I heard rumors that some guys could and could actually get a recordable score. I learned how to tear the M-1 apart and put it back together, and I learned the main principles of keeping it clean, but I certainly never learned to love it. It made my shoulder sore on the occasions when I managed to fire it. I hated the very idea of having to snuggle up to it.

Now, the handgun (I have no memory whatsoever of what the standard issue handgun was) was a different matter. I was a fair shot with the handgun, and if we'd been allowed to keep the pistol with us, as we had to keep the M-1, I might have developed a slightly different attitude toward the military. Nah, probably not. For a few weeks, when I was stationed at McCornack General Hospital in Tacoma, Wash., I was assigned to MP duty in the psycho ward. My job was to escort potentially violent patients from one section to another. We were issued handguns and our orders were to shoot to wound if a patient became violent or attempted to escape. All in all I thought it was pretty sensible of the Army to NOT issue ammunition to us untrained MPs, but I didn't think much of the orders themselves.

I don't think I touched a gun or rifle of any kind from the time I got out of the Army until ... well, wait.

When I was working in Mauston, there was a staff picnic in the summer (but I don't remember which summer; I was there for all of one and part of another. Doesn't matter.) One of the printers brought along his .22 target pistol, and everybody was trying their skill at hitting a beer can that had gotten caught on a tree limb out in the middle of the stream. The distance was maybe 30 feet. After everyone who wanted to try had missed--they were all using the two-handed, face-forward grip popularized by cop shows--I accepted the challenge to see what I could do. I used the Army technique of standing sidewise, holding the gun out at shoulder level as far as I could, squinting down the sights, and squeezing the trigger. To my own astonishment, I think, more than anyone else's, the beer can went flying. That was the last time I fired any kind of firearm; I may have habndled a few since then, but I've never shot one and certainly never wanted to. I decided to quit while I was ahead.

When Carolyn was cleaning out the closets of the house we're living in now, after her parents moved to Sun City, she came across an old single-barrel shotgun that she didn't know what to do with. I think it had come from her mother's brother somehow, but I never learned or cared to know the whole complicated story of how her parents happened to have it. Anyway, they didn't want it; she did check with them. There was no ammunition for it, but its very presence in the house bothered Carolyn, and she finally took it to a gunshop here in Westminster, I think at my suggestion. I thought it might be worth something as an antique. The dealer offered Carolyn something like \$25 for it, even though it needed repairs to be usable. She snapped it up. Please don't ask me for any more details about the gun. I have no idea what kind it was, or what calibre or anything at all; I hardly remember what it looked like. I'm not even certain that it wasn't a rifle instead of a shotgun. I had and have absolutely no interest in that weapon. It could have sat in that

closet forever as far as I was concerned, and I doubt that I would ever have thought about it. If someone had broken into the house while I was here, it certainly would never have occurred to me to have gone for the gun in "self defense." That would have been about the most stupid and futile thing I could possibly have done; why would I want to be clubbed to death with my own gun? Having a gun (or rifle) in my hand has never given me a feeling of power or security. OK, maybe it made me feel of important when I was 12 years old, walking around with a real six-shooter on my hip, but it sends chills up my spine when I think about it now. I was just as happy as Carolyn was to get rid of that shotgun.

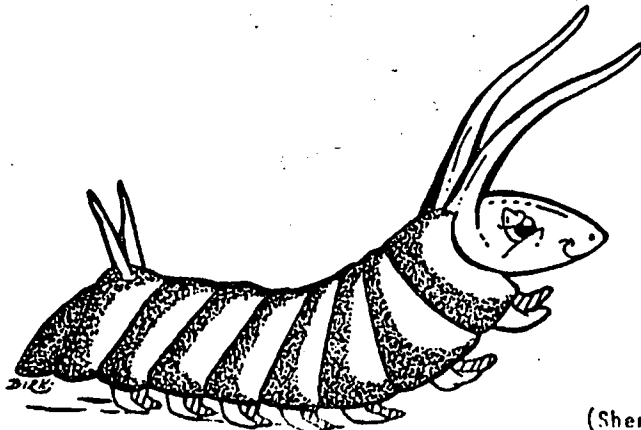
My father had at least one real good reason for his aversion to firearms, one that I didn't know about until I read about it my sister Polly's book, Journey in Virginia, which was published shortly before her death in 1975. On pages 145 and 146 she tells the story of our Granddaddy Bailey's younger sister Emma having eloped in 1912 with a disreputable young man named Clayton Fletcher, a heavy drinker, gambler and all-around reprobate. One day Emma fled her husband, riding a horse to Bailey's new "mansion house" on Lewis' Creek. While Emma was sobbing in her sister-in-law Laura's arms, Clayton arrived in pursuit. Bailey confronted him on the front porch. Clayton had been drinking and was not to be reasoned with. Words led to action. Clayton drew his pistol. Bailey started whacking Clayton on the head and shoulders with his walking stick. The gun went off -- more than once. Bailey was hit and staggered back inside the house. Clayton disappeared after having been knocked backward off the porch.

I don't think my father, 11 years old, witnessed the actual shooting, but he was sent by his cool-headed mother to fetch a doctor from Honaker while his younger brother Jack went the other way to bring a doctor from Richland. One doctor arrived on the evening train and the other on horseback.

"Using the kitchen table as an operating table and kerosene lanterns and candles for light, the two doctors removed bullets and sewed torn flesh. Bailey recovered. Afterward, Bert, who held a lantern through the whole process, was never able to stand the sight of blood without feeling ill."

That was true. It was never Daddy who bandaged the cuts and scrapes of the kids; and I recall once, when I was only about 4 or 5, Daddy cut his finger somehow while working on a car engine. I remember him walking up to the house, staring at his brightly bleeding finger, until he reached the porch, and then falling forward in a faint. Fortunately, Mom was right there to bandage it for him.

I hope no one takes any of this as an argument for or against gun control. I'm not interested in violating anyone's Constitutional rights. Some of the discussions in recent *Donolocs* got me thinking about what guns mean to me, personally, and this is what I came up with. I said at the beginning that the story doesn't have a moral. I hope we can leave it at that.



(Sheryl Birkhead)

FANZINES RECEIVED IN EXCHANGE FOR DON-O-SAUR

This is still not a review column. It is just a list of zines I've received since the previous issue of DON-o-SAUR, with occasional comments and observations.

AGA #124 & 125 (Oct. and Nov. 1989; Frederique and Francis Valery, French Space Academy, c/o Frederique Pinsard, 11 rue des Ignorons, 33800 Bordeaux, France. Attractive 6X8 1/2 fanzine French language fanzine.

AirGlow #8, T.L. Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, VT 05043-0014, the eccentric personalzine (stapled at top, you'll flip and read pages 2 and 3 as a continuous experience). Terry has the knack of pulling you into his world. Incredible bargain at \$1 for two issues.

THE ATROCITY Vol. 13, #11 and 13, Hank Roll, 2419 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 15221, \$8 for 12 monthly issues. Front cover illo on #13 says "Intelligence Run Amuck." That may sum it up. This patchwork zine seems to have something to do with Mensa. An abnormal sense of humor may be required to appreciate it.

BCSFazine #198, 199, 200 AND THE BCSFA DIRECTORY 1990. Special 200th issue is 14x11, the others are (5 1/2 x 8 1/2). British Columbia SF Association, P.O. Box 35577, Stn. E, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4C9, Canada. Available for "the usual." An impressive combination of clubzine and genzine.

CONVENTION LOG #56, R. Laurraine Tuttle, 5876 Bowerfoot Street, #4, Los Angeles, CA 90016-4910. Eight-page letter substitute, discussing the breakup of a relationship, cons, books, movies, smokers' rights, etc.

CROOKED ROADS Vol. 1 #1, Oct. 1989. Published by Carl Bettis, P.O. Box 32631, Kansas City, MO 64111. Carl is a poet, and much of this 24-page (8 1/2 x 11) issue is devoted to poetry itself or discussions of poetry. Carl (as all good poets are) is also socially and politically conscious; he sees little hope for Amerika. \$4 a year or \$1.50 for a sample copy. (See HERMIT CRAB, a little further along.)

DE PROFUNDIS #215 (January 1990), Los Angeles SF Society newsletter. 11513 Burbank Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 91601. "The usual." Once and future secretary Mike Glyer's minutes are always worth reading--next best thing to being there (or maybe better).

ERO 109 (January 1990), B.T. (Terry) Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RO, England. 24-page 6X8 perzine, with an editorial on John W. Campbell and a section on early rocket planes. Terry wants to buy or otherwise acquire U.S. books on a sort of barter basis. Worth asking about.

FACTSHEET FIVE 33, Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Renaissance, NY 12144-4502. THE catalogue (116 pages) of fanzines and small press publications--of all kinds. \$2 per copy or trade.

FILE 77 #83, Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401. Best fanzine of 1988 (1989 Hugo winner), edited by world's best fanwriter (Hugo winner for several years). Includes a report on the big (the not THE BIG earthquake). 5 issues for \$5, or by arrangement.

FOSFAX #145, 146, 147 (Nov., Dec. '89, Jan. '90), clubzine of the Falls of the Ohio SF Association

(FOSFA), edited by Timothy Lane and Janice Moore, published by the Committee to Publish FOSFAX (Grant McCormick and Timothy Lane) P.O. Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, \$2 per issue, \$15 a year. 38 to 52 pages of club news, reviews and voluminous LoCs every month! The mind boggles.

FUCK THE TORIES Sept. '89, Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh St., Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, United Kingdom. 26 pages (8 1/2 x 11) of anarchy steeped in fan-nishness. Available for the usual and "supports the usual causes."

GRAVE Matters #1, page and a half letter substitute from Chris Mills, P.O. Box 1245, Reseda CA 91337. He has moved again and is now engaged to be married to a young woman named Elyat.

HERMIT CRAB, Carl Ray Bettis is what the CR B in CRAB stands for, and he explains that "HERMIT" was added because he is one. He holes up at PO Box 32631, Kansas City MO 64111, and this 6-page issue is available for "the usual." Carl and I do indeed share some prejudices, as he notes in his review of DOS.

THE INCOMPLETE GEOMETER (Winter 1990, I guess, though no date or issue # is given) Bill Bridget, 1022 N. Runyon Drive, Chattanooga, TN 37405. This one consists of an exchange of letters between Ned Brooks and Bill, in which occasional references are made to DOS.

IGOTS (It Goes On the Shelf), #6, Nov. 1989, Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St., Newport News, VA 23605. Ned's reading is wide and varied and his comments insightful. Reviews are mixed with LoCs in a readable stew.

THE LEIGHTON LOOK, three issues from Rodney Leighton, RR 3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada B0K 1L0. One issue is dated December 1989 and I suppose the two before that could be October and November. Rodney calls it a "perzine reviewzine piece of trash." It's a bit confusing because he is experimenting with format and content (he reviews stuff like wrestling magazines, ugh!) but I wouldn't call it trash.

MIMOSA #7, Dick & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1270, Germantown, MD 20874-0998, \$2 or trade or contribution. Marvelous! A genuine old-fashioned 44-page fannish genzine, mimeod on twill, with front and back covers by Peggy Ransom and Teddy Harvia, and including, among other wonders, a dialogue between Bob Tucker and Robert Bloch, reprinted, with reminiscences, from Chat.

OTHER REALMS #25 (Summer/Fall 1989), Chuq Von Rosbach, 35111-F Newark Blvd, Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560. \$2.85 per copy or \$11 for four-issue subscription. This 60-page issue (produced with Pagemaker desktop publishing system, giving it a typeset look) is crammed with reviews and articles along with a relatively few letters and some fine artwork, not the least gorgeous of which is the cover by Peggy Ransom.

PIRATE JENNY #4 (Winter 1989), Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116. 11x17 folded, 32 pages plus B.Ware wraparound cover; \$3 per issue or \$10 for 4-issue sub.

Inside front cover is birth announcement for daughter, Madeline Frances Virzi, born July 14, '89. Typeset on Kaypro, with laser printer, and it's worth reading, not just easy to read.

PROBE #78 (November, 1989); Neil van Niekerk, P.O. Box 2538, Primrose, South Africa 1416. 100 pages (54x84, folded) of articles, fiction, reviews, locs etc. Official clubzine of Science Fiction South Africa. Available for trade.

THE RELUCTANT FAMULUS #7 and 8, Thomas Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. Tom continues to strive for growth and improvement. He apologizes in issue 8 for the severe imbalance of locs, which take up far more than half of the 40 pages. His interesting replies to the interesting letters help account for that. Didn't bother me. Available for the usual; he's probably rather have contributions of articles or artwork than money.

RUNE #80, Jeanne Mealy and David E. Romm; official publication of the Minnesota SF Society, P.O. Box 8297 Lake Street Sta., Minneapolis, MN 55408. 36 pages (11x17 folded) including fantastic wraparound covers by Robert Pasternak; lots of inside illos and a wide range of locs and articles. Great looking zine, typeset with pagemaker, and fun to read. An "interactive" fanzine, but can be had for \$2 or 4-issue sub for \$10.

SCAVENGER'S NEWSLETTER #70, Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329. THE magazine for small press editors, writers and artists. Sample copy \$1.50. Subscription rates are \$10 a year bulk, \$14 first class. 30 pages (8.5x11 folded).

SCREWED UP LETTERS #6, Alan J. Sullivan, 13 Weir Gardens, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7TH England. Alan's farewell issue for at least the next three years, during which time he'll be a student at The Polytechnic of East London. 20 pages (8.5x11 folded) of comments on personal and social topics, mingled with a sort of comic strip, "A Rampage of Olafs" by Ken Cheslin.

THE SHUTTLE #56, 57 and 58 (Nov. 89 to Jan. '99). Official newzine of

the South Florida SF Society, P.O. Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143. Pretty much a typical clubzine, with occasional reviews and con reports.

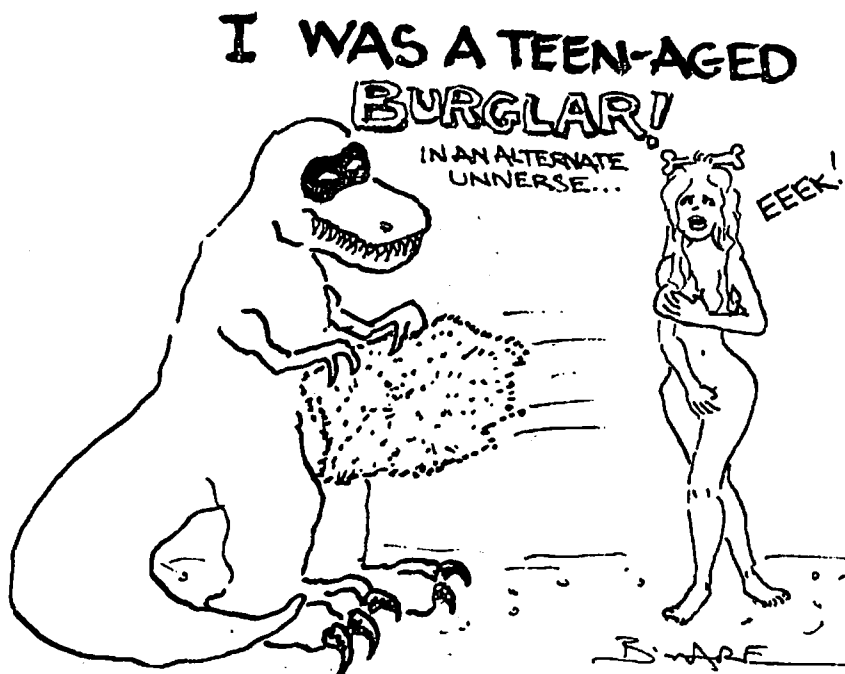
SPENT BRASS #1, Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, 315 N. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703. 18 page genzine includes zine reviews by Peter Larsen (who detests FOSFAX), a Dr. Who episode by Tom Quale, some fuzzy photos and an article about the con of the future by Andy Hooper.

STICKY QUARTERS #19, Brian Earl Brown, 11657 Beaconsfield, Detroit MI 48224. 62 pages (8.5x11) plus covers, with cover art by Raul Garcia Capella, Steve Fox, Bill Bryan and Taral; articles by Eric Mayer, John Berry, Taral and Graham Stone. And lots of locs and lots of interior illos. Available for trade, locs, articles, art or \$3. Mimeod, with good clean repro.

TEXAS SF INQUIRER #30 and 32, Dale Denton & Alexander R. Slate, Box 9612, Austin, TX 78766. Publication of Fandom Association of Central Texas (FACT), available for \$1.50 or the usual, or a 6-issue sub for \$7.50. I won't try to explain it, but issue 32 precedes issue 30, and #31 is still to come.

VIDIOT #3 (Winter 1990), Flint Mitchell, 7331 Terri Robyn Drive, St. Louis, MO 63129-5233; \$1 each, no subs. 20 pages (8.5x11 folded) including covers (photos). Consists largely of film reviews and such, but also touches on books and fanzines. In his intelligent review of DON-o-SAUR (which he terms more intelligent than average), Flint says he has no idea why I sent him a copy. I was inviting a trade.

XENIUM 15 (January 1990), Mike Olicksohn, 508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6 Canada; "the latest in an apparently endless stream of blue fanzines..." Covers by Joan Hanke Woods enclose some touching personal commentary by Mike, some educational material from Joe Haldeman, a shocking article about the perils of professional photography by Eleasar Tetramariner and a sort of con report by Christina Lake. And, as always, something extra.



(B. Ware)

Time Enough for Time

(Book reviews reprinted from *The Denver Post* and DASFAx)

It's time again to speak of time--time travel, time passages, time perception. There seems to be no end to the new spins that good SF writers can put on old themes. And time is certainly one of those time-tested, time-honored topics.

Poul Anderson's latest novel--his first solo after nearly a decade of collaborations--is "The Boat of a Million Years" (Tor, \$19.95). It's an immortality epic more than vaguely reminiscent of "My First Two Thousand Years: the Autobiography of the Wandering Jew" by George Sylvester Viereck and Paul Eldridge (1928); and good luck in trying to find a copy of that or its companion novels, "Salome" and "The Invincible Adam."

Anderson's premise is that from the early days of humanity, a few individuals (very, very few) have possessed a longevity gene, endowing them with extraordinarily good health and recuperative powers and the capability of living forever, barring accident or extreme violence.

The catch is that these long-lived individuals possess no other particular gifts--no exceptional intelligence or wisdom, no telepathic powers. They're just ordinary folks, except that they don't die. And of course they don't even dare let their condition be known. They're uniformly lonely, isolated outcasts, seeking their own kind.

The book traces some seven or eight of the immortals over the millenia, from about 300 B.C. to some indefinite time in our future, when immortality has become the common property of humanity, but only the originals have any incentive to venture to the stars. The final chapters constitute a stirring space saga.

The most remarkable thing about the novel is Anderson's ability to evoke so many different cultures, climes and times so convincingly and so economically.

"Brain Rose" by Nancy Kress (Morrow, \$22.95) takes a new look at reincarnation and past-life recall. Sounds like a New Age novel? Well, sort of, somewhat, in a way. But don't pre-judge.

The action takes place at a private hospital where the main characters are undergoing Previous Life Access Surgery, a procedure that allows patients to remember their past lives.

Mysteriously, it turns out that even a decision to undergo the surgery renders individuals immune to the new AIDS-like memory-destruction plague sweeping the world. Even more mysteriously, one of the more obnoxious characters seems to bear some kind of relationship to an incredibly large number of other people.

The book does get a bit abstract and obscure. I may have to read the last couple of chapters again to figure out exactly what has happened and why. Fascinating concept, though.

"Chekov's Journey" by Ian Watson (Carroll & Graf, \$16.95) presents the fascinating concept that time travel cannot be used in conjunction with space travel because time is a product of the human mind and does not exist beyond the planet of its origin. Thus, when a late 21st century Soviet space ship attempts to jump

into the future, it goes out of control and plunges back through time to cause the great Siberian Tunguska explosion of 1908 -- except that in another time line it occurs some 20 years earlier.

That's only a part of the story. The main action takes place in more or less the present, with a Soviet film production crew working on a movie version of playwright Anton Chekov's journey to Siberia in 1890.

They're using the newly developed technique of "reincarnation by hypnosis" to enable the actor Mikhail to portray the role convincingly. Under hypnosis, Mikhail IS Chekov.

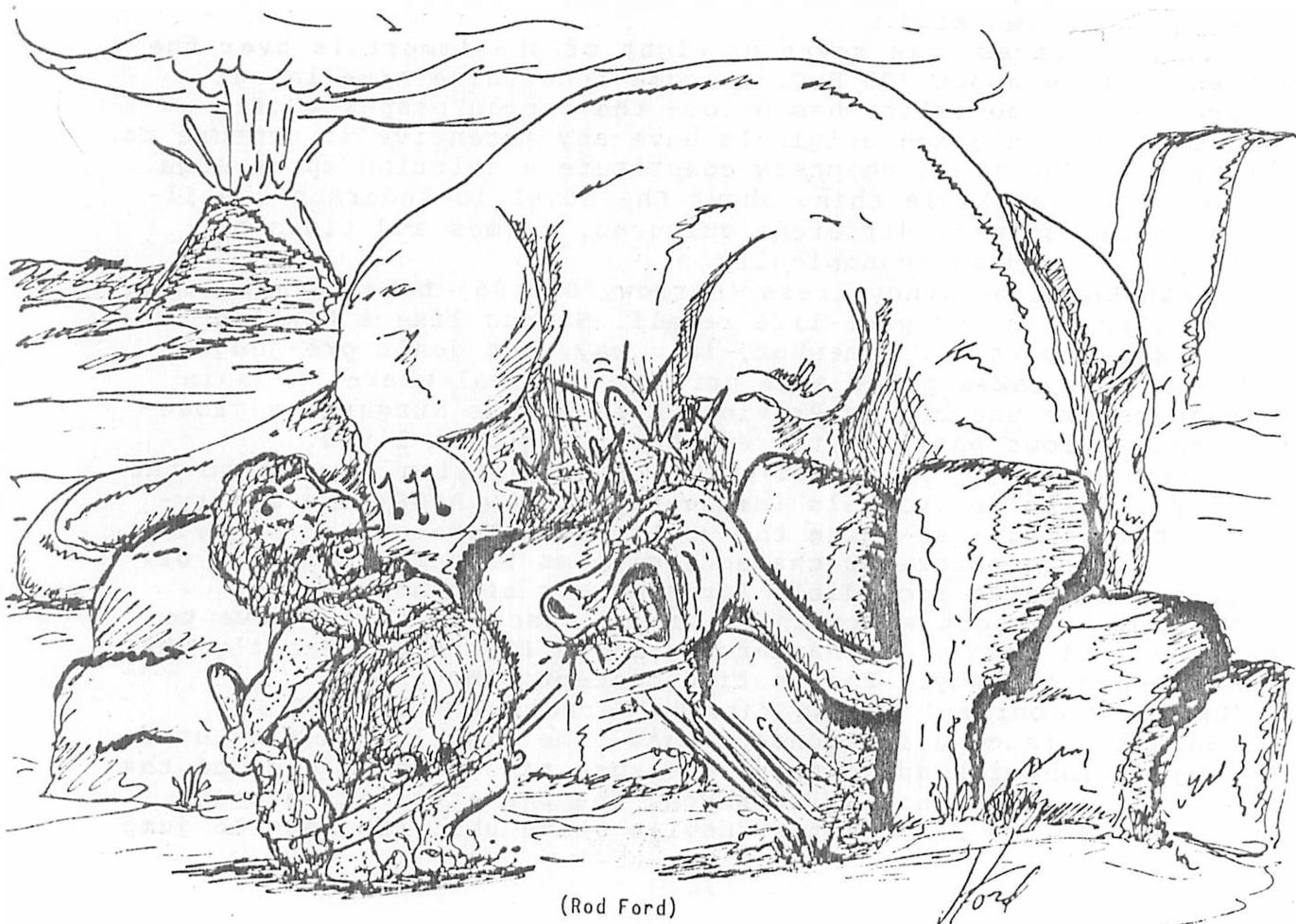
But the journey he remembers is not the historical one that Chekov actually took. And then Mikhail starts "remembering" being the captain of that 2090 space ship.

There's no a happy ending, but it's clear what happens.

If you tire of time and would like to check out a different approach to politics, religion, memory and cybernetics, I'll recommend "The God Project" by Stan Lee (Grove Weidenfeld, \$19.95).

It may sound like other stories you've read about secret government projects to develop artificial intelligence, but Stan Lee (whose only other novel that I know of is "Dunn's Conundrum") stirs the stock ingredients into a tantalizing stew.

The political and religious elements are a bit controversial, which could be one reason none of the big publishers handled the book. It isn't because of any story-telling flaws.



(Rod Ford)

DON-o-LOCS

Thea Hutcheson
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Englewood, CO 80110

I always enjoy your writing, especially when it's

personal. The argument about education got me. I was an average student in high school. I really began to develop my love of writing then. I had a couple of teachers who pressed me to write and gave me tips that helped.

But it wasn't until college that I really excelled and pushed myself to, well, maybe not my limit, but I found that I did have an appetite for learning and realized that there was an awful lot to learn out there. I also had some teachers, you included, who kept pushing me to write.

But as for what education does or should do, I have mixed feelings. I think that education is supposed to teach the things that human beings have discovered in the course of their stay on Earth, but I believe that there are any number of ways to do that. I guess that the most important part is for the teacher to stimulate the kids to learn, connections. For example, literature. In high school, I had to learn the difference between a book report and a review. That was a difficult concept for me. If it hadn't been for you, I might still be confused. It was no longer just enough to digest the book, now I had to think about it and what it was doing. I don't think that it's enough to cram info into a kid's head, there has to be a reason for doing it. People can't just expect that one day all the pieces are going to fall into place. It's like teaching physics and geometry by playing pool. Or teaching logic by programming. The teacher must show concrete examples, but I don't think that it follows that every subject ought to be taught from the perspective that it is integral to life, although I have found that everything connects somehow. That's life.

I see a trend in my daughter's school toward teaching by doing. If more schools taught the way a lot of colleges teach (I refer specifically to the science class where the kids apply what they learn by building a critter that can do something), I think that a lot more kids would be more enthusiastic about it, especially the kids whose parents are addicts or alcoholics. It should not be a place to learn only mental things, but social things, too.

I believe that it is a sad commentary when schools must supply the basic

necessities of family life, but if the kids aren't getting it at home, then school (or I suppose the church) must supply it.

As for the INRI, I didn't know either. But then I always enjoyed reading the Bible for its literary beauty, rather than as a teaching tool.

On the subject of gun control, I must disagree with Simon. There is no use in our society for a semi-automatic weapon. As for the new laws infringing on the right to bear arms, I don't think it conflicts. When that right was given to Americans, it was more important; the new country had just been in a war to sever itself from Britain's rule and become independent. The men who wrote that certainly wanted to make sure that we would be able to protect ourselves from another attack by Britain or some other country.

I think they were in a state of fervor, still high from their victory. They couldn't foresee that technology would create such terrifying death machines. You go right ahead and own your pistol or rifle; suits me fine. But a semi-automatic weapon has only one purpose: to kill men as fast and efficiently as possible. There is simply no reason to own one (unless you are a collector and then it should be locked up in a display case). No one is at war with us here, there are no enemies so powerful that a pistol or rifle cannot take care of them. And if there were, the military would be called out and their weapons are more than adequate to deal with them.

I will touch briefly on the subject of Americans being snobbish and insulated. Much to my dismay and personal embarrassment I admit that we are. I did a paper in the 11th grade which explored how the people of 10 countries felt about the U.S. I was shocked and hurt. They didn't like us very much.

When I was in Montreal in 1976, I went to the French quarter with a man my sister had designated my guide and was amazed to find that the people wouldn't speak to you if you didn't speak French, even if they understood you. I thought that was pretty snobbish, but then he explained to me that Canada was in the middle of a debate on how French to keep the country. There was a core of people who really felt that they were French and were going to stay that way. I didn't pick up much French while I was there (a month) be-

cause there were enough people in the group I spent time with who spoke English. As a last note, I promise not to tell anyone about *Don-O-Saur*, I'll keep it a state secret, not even torture will drag the truth out of me.

Teddy Harvia I can't remember
P.O. Box 905 the last fanzine I
Eulless, TX 76039 saw that was printed
 as 8 1/2 x 11 turn

pages. At first I thought it was a comic book, a notion quickly dispelled by a look at the blocks of text on the inside. Still I loved the babe in bubbles on the back. I immediately noted the error in your cover art. Iguanas are herbivorous and even large ones would show no interest in devouring maidens, even delicious ones. Only mavens of B movies think them carnivorous and everyone knows that it is the silly fins the special-effects department puts on their backs that makes them irritable.

I think it's great that you are writing off your publication for tax purposes. A number of fans, including myself, wrote off my publications long ago, but for purely artistic reasons. Ha, ha, ha!

Alexis A. Gilliland Nice polit-
4030 Eighth St. South ically correct
Arlington, VA 22204 cover; the lady
 tied to the
stake remains empowered with her blaster in its holster. Even as she is menaced by a leering macrophallic reptile.

Quite a lot of interesting stuff inside, including your own speculations about how your life might have been different (or maybe not) if you had only made different choices. Maybe you truly are stuck in some sort of predestinate grove, which admits no branching or alternatives. On the other hand, it may be that real branches exist, only you don't recognize them. Chess players, who rehash past reality all the time (even as they repeat it with depressing frequency) have formulated a philosophy which covers most cases: play differently, lose differently.

What choices might I have made differently? Hard to say, especially when they take the form: If only I had done X, I would have been a different person. Maybe to have never bought a TV set?

My suspicion is that the person stays the same, only in a different environment, and the possible environments are probably pretty much convergent. In my desk drawer I have a nearly new leather collar with HATDAMA scratched into the nameplate, along with our address on Pennsylvania Ave. Long ago I had read that Siamese cats would walk on a leash, and Dolly thought we ought to try it. Wrong. Hatdama wouldn't do anything of the sort, but if he had, if we had insisted, perhaps we could have gone on the David Letterman Show. He was a cat of considerable character.

In the letter column, the anti gun-control advocates seem to be out in force, with a fair number of death penalty advocates as well. Conservatives at their charming best. Perhaps the solution is to enforce the death penalty for killing people with a hand gun. Or a hunting rifle. Forget about the front end; you can buy, own or sell anything that was ever made to your heart's content. BUT. Make one mistake using those lethal toys, and it's the good old death chamber. Buck favors death for murderers, rapists, drug dealers and child abusers? Add to his list fools with tools.

Roy Lavender observes that the fate of those Chinese students in Tianamen Square prove that people without handguns (or anyway hunting rifles) are helpless against the might of the state. We tend to see what supports our belief system, and our interpretation of the facts afterward is more or less inclined to prove that we were right all along. The *Post* reported that the leaders of the students had agreed to evacuate Tianamen Square, and the authorities had agreed to leave the escape route open. Only nobody had told the commander of the provincial armored division who ran into them ON the escape route. An accident? Probably. Deng could have stomped the students any time he wanted without resorting to trickery.

In East Germany Honnecker fell, and the Berlin Wall came down. Now the people have taken over the Stasi compounds, housing the State Secret Police. Without handguns. The mob still holds them, and some Lt. Gen. is bleating piteously about "chaos" as his precious Stasi are being dispersed to assignments like mining coal. Meanwhile the East German Communists are changing

their name to something like Social Democrats (Young Republicans for Freedom didn't fly). What's in a name? Social Democrats without the Stasi just won't be the same. So much for the might of the state. Lavender may consider this the exception that tests his rule. Along with other exceptions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria.

The Revolution of November 1989 is still in progress, the watershed event that will define the world well into the next century. Certainly events are moving fast enough so that by our own elections in 1990 the outcome will be known, and maybe even understood.

Estonia just abolished the constitutional requirement that the Communist Party must hold the leading role in government. An unsigned editorial in Pravda declares that these constitutional questions need to be considered in a calm and rational manner. Latvia is working very carefully around the problem of secession. Lithuania has asserted local control of the local economy.

The Communist Empire is in the process of collapsing and by golly, gun ownership or the lack thereof turns out to be totally irrelevant. Or maybe not. The widespread ownership of guns might have made Stalin behave himself, a thought which inspires reference to our first paragraph.

Pavel ponders the arms race. The basic problem is first that no war using nuclear weapons is going to have any satisfactory outcome. And second, both sides are so largely dependent on nuclear weapons that they can't avoid using them in a crisis. Massive Soviet superiority in numbers doesn't change this, nor do any of the neat and humongously expensive gadgets dreamed up by the Americans. (The B-2 bomber, touted as a technological tour de force, comes to mind as does its predecessor, the B-1B, which turned out to be a lemon of truly epic proportions.) The arms race, by serving as a kind of Moral Equivalent of War (MEOW), had the result that both sides armed themselves to the teeth while conducting a foreign policy aimed at avoiding any real confrontation. True, all that money could have been better spent, but compared to having a nuclear way it was a real bargain.

On the other hand, it will be hard

for the U.S. to continue to race by itself when the other side has more or less collapsed in a heap. What will we do without the Communists, and especially what will our conservatives do without them? Running as a pro-Star Wars, anti-abortion candidate isn't going to make it in the '90s, even for George Bush.

Simon N. Hawke
noted author and
Denver recluse

As usual, a
fascinating issue
though I prefer
the old format.

When it comes to turning points in my life, hell, I could write a book on the subject. I've been through more turning points than Shirley MacLaine. But the one constant in my life, since about the age of 6 or 7, has been writing. I always knew that was what I wanted to do with my life ever since that fateful day when my elementary school teacher discovered that I had stolen back into class during recess to write in the empty classroom. As a child, I had a rather poor command of English (having grown up speaking Russian first) and was always an outsider, the kid who got stomped every day in the playground for being a "Commie." Somehow, I stumbled onto the idea of escaping my miserable childhood through writing. I used to write these little fantasies in my composition books, where all the characters were the children in the class and myself, having adventures together, only in the stories, as opposed to real life, we were friends and got along. My teacher read what I had written and made me read it to the class at the end of the day. I did so with dread, sure I would be laughed at, but when I had finished, they were all rapt with attention and I had "broken through" to them. That was when I knew what I would do with my life.

Unfortunately, I had no support in that ambition. (Yes, you want to write, but what will you really do for a living?) I was encouraged to teach or go into journalism. (In fact, my first professional sale, as a freshman in college, was a journalism piece.) I often wonder what would have happened to me if I had not fallen with "the hoods" in junior high and been packed off to military school by my parents. What if I had liked it and gone into the service, instead of suffering through four of the worst years of my

life and developing a permanent anti-authoritarian streak?

I wonder what would have happened if I had not become frustrated with the journalism curriculum in college and switched to drama -- God knows why. All the pretty girls were there, I guess. And I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't taken that job as busboy to earn some badly needed income and the place had not turned out to be a top hung out. They decided the "kid" was OK and invited me to a party, where I had my introduction to amphetamines and before I knew it, I was a biker with a monkey on my back. What if I hadn't "crashed" and had a nervous breakdown? What if I hadn't come to my senses, gotten straight (with the help of a guy I met in the drama dept., who took me in and took care of me while I went through withdrawal) and decided to go back and finish my college education?

Which, by the way, was generally useless except for my extra-curricular activities in the college radio station. Then my BA was done and I had no idea what to do, so I went into broadcasting. I wound up working for the UN, making lots of money as a sound engineer and slowly going mad. So I chucked it and rode my bike to LA with some vague idea of getting into television. What if, meanwhile, I hadn't made my first sale to Galaxy, because a friend had read something I'd written and suggested that I send it to them? And what if Editor J.J. Pierce hadn't been kind enough to call me in LA (where he knew I didn't know a soul) and suggest I check out LASFS, where I could meet some fans and writers? Which in turn led to meeting J. Neil Schulman and Vic Koman, both barely starting their own careers, who pestered me to submit a story I'd written to Ellison's Last Dangerous Visions. I had read that the anthology was closed to submissions but they insisted that I call him and ask if he'd agree to look at it.

Which led to an invitation to his home to show him the story (which he never read, except for the opening line), which led to a friendship, which led to an introduction to Norman Spinrad when LA became more than I could bear. Harlan had told me to look up Norman when I got back to New York, because he thought we'd get along. I did. We got together for drinks in The Lion's Head pub in the Village and he

invited me to a party where I met my agent. I showed her the story Harlan hadn't bothered to read; she used it as a proposal to sell my first novel and, about a decade and 41 novel sales later, I'm still at it. (And Last Dangerous Visions still hasn't come out!)

"Life," as John Lennon once said, "is something that happens to you while you're busy making other plans." I don't really believe in Fate or predestination, but I do think that if you believe, deep down in your soul, that you were meant to do a particular thing, somehow, even if only subconsciously, you wind up following a path that eventually leads you there.

Ruth Berman
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Interesting layout
and use of typefaces
but it got kind of
hard to read--I'm
not sure if it was
because of the layout alone or if the
particular typeface used for most of
the text was a problem for me.

I was rather surprised that both Mike Glicksohn and Howard DeVore mention being in favor of the death penalty for drug dealers. Perhaps I'm influenced by the fact that someone well known in sf was convicted as a drug dealer and served a sentence, but it seems odd that they would want to have Ted White killed. I can't really see counting drug-dealing as being at the same level of moral horror as murder and rape. Or, rather, I can see it in a way, because drugs cause many deaths. But then, tobacco and asbestos have caused many more deaths, and the tobacco and asbestos companies tried much harder for many years to suppress information about the dangers of those substances. Unless the presidents of tobacco and asbestos companies are to be included as deserving the death penalty (rather difficult, since there is no criminal penalty attached to their murders at all, and only the uncertain civil penalty of lawsuit damages), it hardly seems worthwhile to argue that drug dealers deserve the death penalty.

[I foresee the day when imprisoned drug dealers will be as anachronistic as imprisoned gamblers, abortionists and dealers in adult pornography.]

Cathy Howard wonders if poetry would

be bad if it were highly paid. Yes, actually, there is a correlation between high payment for poetry (and prose, for that matter) and badness. There are exceptions, of course. I can't think of any in modern poetry, but an example in modern prose is Tolkien, who was a good writer in spite of getting on the best-seller list. But on the average, a writer who gets on the best-seller list (with the high payment that goes with that) is likely to be as bad as, say, Kahlil Gibran (remember Kahlil Gibran?) or Rod McKuen in poetry, or Grace Metalious in prose. It's nice when good writers get paid well, but it doesn't happen all that often, unfortunately. There's no harm in going to school to get a better job, but if that's her only reason for attending, she's probably missing a lot and would be better off (if the option were available) taking an apprenticeship to learn whatever job she's aiming at. Whether the students who are bored by such non-practical subjects as literary criticism are missing out on the skills they will need to land those hypothetical better jobs (ability to argue? sensitivity to subtle distinctions? better appreciation of good writing possibly increased ability to write well as a consequence?) is an interesting question, and not an easy one to answer--also unfortunately.

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

I was going to start off by complaining about your printing DoS 56 sideways but realized that I was simply reacting to conditioning. Because most of us are limited by the equipment we use to writing/composing on pages with the 8 1/2-inch side as the top-bottom, having it done the other way just doesn't seem right. There is nothing wrong with it being done the other way --it just violates our sense of the way it is supposed to be.

Which is why many of us, most definitely including myself, have trouble with quantum mechanics: it violates my sense of the way things are supposed to be. If I accept everything that is written about QM, and I think that a lot of what is written is simply bad reporting by befuddled reporters, reality tends to get a bit shaky and it is

not supposed to do that. Reality is supposed to be set firmly in concrete and supported by what my five (or six or seven or how many) senses tell me. I will admit there have been times over the years that my senses have told me things which I refused to believe. Does that mean, then, that reality is something we have built within our minds and if we see something that doesn't fit the brain refuses to accept it? Don't think about that--it is even worse than Quantum Mechanics.

But QM, or maybe something else, is what gives us the idea of alternate universes and branching time lines and all that. I see one great flaw in all this. We are assigning too much importance to human beings. If we go along with this theory we are saying that every time any human being makes a decision one way or the other the whole universe branches off to form a line where it would have gone the other way. The whole universe? Can you really bring yourself to believe that? Remember the story of the man who cried out to the universe, "I exist!" to which the universe replied, "Who cares?"

{No, but I recall a poem by Stephen Crane that says almost the same thing. Anyway, quantum theory suggests that the universe splits every time any subatomic particle goes one way instead of another; it's the SF writers who have expanded (or reduced?) the idea to the human level.}

Think of what we are really saying with this idea. We are saying that each and every human being on this planet, circling an average star, is so important that every decision made by any one of them affects the whole cosmos. Really? Can we really believe something like that? If such is the case we had better start rethinking all of our philosophies. Program a few million computers to try to come up with an answer. And if we accept that sort of thing can we restrict it to human life? Did the death of that mosquito I slapped last summer change the universe?

{In Bradbury's story, "The Sound of Thunder," it's the death of a butterfly.}

pany closed the operation where I was working. Not going to college was hardly a decision; I would have had no help and no money, and anyway I was single and not considering getting married; I didn't even know any girls I wanted to date, much less marry. Marrying Juanita was my best decision; taking the plunge and going to a science fiction meeting (where I met Juanita) was the second-best. Otherwise... there haven't been all that many. Buying a house instead of continuing to rent only happened five years ago, too recently to judge how good a decision it's been.

I can agree fully with Ann Greenberg's letter. I suppose I was considered a "grind" at school because I got the best grades, but actually I didn't study all that much. Nobody had homework assignments back then, and I had the faculty of reading the textbook once and understanding it. (I might have had a terribly hard time in college if I'd gone; I was used to being the best without working at it much.)

If you want to decriminalize drugs, then you automatically want to ban firearms. It gives the former drug-runners an alternative commodity to handle, and keeps them off the relief rolls. It won't reduce the quantity of guns in the country, any more than banning alcohol and later banning drugs reduced the quantity consumed, but it might redistribute the ownership a bit. And make policemen's lots even less happy -- did you see the news item that Moscow police have to patrol in pairs now because they're being killed for their weapons? Provide safer working conditions for burglars, too.

No, Howard, my black girlfriend was barred specifically because she was black. As for Riva being barred, I can understand that; I wouldn't let Riva in any hotel I owned, either. (As for being a "mixed couple," that's still barring the woman because she's black.)

The prison inmate that Howard mentions told me he was in for auto theft. I suppose that might not have been true, or maybe he just continued the practice on those weekend passes; I lost track of them, but I'd have thought he's have been out by now.

We're now at least talking about partial disarmament, which will leave more money for other and more worthy causes. Doing something about it might be something else again. Personally I

think we should start with reducing the Navy--maybe with fewer ships and personnel they could remember what they're supposed to be doing and cut down on the accidents.

I agree somewhat with Hawke, but have a few quibbles. If guns were banned, it wouldn't be necessary for criminals to make their own, not with the smuggling apparatus that was set up during Prohibition and expanded to handle drugs. I doubt that males are any more insensitive than they have always been; it's just that females are being taught that they can complain instead of being submissive to the Masters. Rape is on the rise because women are no longer compliant about "putting out," while the men insist on their traditional prerogatives. If those radicals hadn't insisted on educating women, we males could continue to be comfortable and discreet... If the populace isn't disarmed, the women might even begin shooting the rapists, and then where will we be? We might even have to learn sensitivity.

Juanita Coulson

2677W-500N

Hartford City IN 47348

I'll underline Buck's

comments about

I would not be

here if I had not been there, in that the majority of "decisions" are made for us by fate, random chance, the environment, and things outside our control. I would not be here if fate hadn't decided that my mother, out of desperation (because I was literally starving to death on mother's milk and regular formula, tried in sequence), would try buying raw milk from a local farmer. My cousin apparently survived through the same desperation tactic on my aunt's part. Later on, my cousin's kids were put on Similac fairly quickly, since they had inherited the same weird gene my cousin and I have--that we couldn't digest pasteurized milk or get any nutritional benefits from it. Fully nutritional artificial substitutes didn't exist when we were infants in the late '20s and early '30s, and we both would have died without the chance discovery that unpasteurized (but wholesome) milk would keep us alive.

Another fate intervention involved the horrendous floods ravaging the Great Lakes area in the last '30s. My mother was in the hospital at the time, and my father (a lousy parent in all

respects) took me along with him when he went to visit some cronies manning the sandbag line on the crumbling levees. I can vividly remember wandering up to the top of that levee and seeing the flood waters rushing by and reaching out to pat the water with my toe. Only luck decided I wouldn't lose my balance and topple in and drown. One of the other workers, not my father), saw me just in time and got me down off of there before the inevitable happened. I was about 5 years old at the time and totally unaware of the danger.

Ditto an incident in the same period when I managed to "wind up" my tire swing until the rope pinched the back of my neck and held me suspended--and gradually strangling. My mother just happened to glance out the kitchen window and rushed out to rescue me. Normally she would have been at work then. She was home on a rare vacation day. Otherwise, I would have suffocated.

I also ran headfirst into the brick wall of my school building and got myself a dandy concussion, during the same time frame. Fate decreed it was a concussion, not a fatal skull fracture. Certainly nothing I was doing determined survival. Quite the reverse. I had head down and was chugging straight ahead, determined to avoid the kid who was "it" in a game of tag. Encroaching myopia and childish unconcern probably made me oblivious to the danger until I hit the wall and--literally--bounced.

It's a miracle I survived kidhood. In a way, it's a miracle a lot of kids survive kidhood. They have no concept of mortality, and many of them behave accordingly. Some don't make it.

As for conscious decisions, I made one critically important one when I was about 10. I had begun to become aware of the games older girls were playing in order to attract boys. Quite deliberately, while I was still (just barely) pre-pubescent, I decided the whole game was utterly stupid and that I would refuse to play it. Ever. And I never did.

If fate hadn't decreed that I would stumble into fandom and finally meet a male who didn't want to play the game either, I would have remained single and possibly virgin my entire life.

By the game I mean the entire eyelash fluttering and flattering routine. I won't smother my own intelligence to boost a male's ego. I watched girls,

and later, women I admired greatly demean themselves in that way just for the sake of hanging onto male affections. Ptooeey.

I know, intellectually, that females have made conscious decisions in the other direction down through the millennia, because they realized the alternative was unbearable loneliness and a Darwinian result that their genes would die with them. I doubt if the second factor affected my conscious choice to refuse the sacrifice, at age 10. But the first factor most definitely did. I was aware of loneliness. I was an only child, extremely bright, and raised without inhibitions, which set me apart from the mainstream to the nth degree. Picture that girlchild scenario in the '30s and '40s and '50s, and you'll see what I'm talking about. But I never regretted the decision and I still don't.

And I don't think I've come out of it at all badly. Some might say I simply got lucky, discovering fandom and Buck. I believe the two were un-connected but automatically dovetailed. The sole drawback I've found is that getting inside the skins of some of the characters I create in my professional fiction writing is tricky. I understand the game, intellectually. I have to fake the emotional responses. So far no one's complained about the results.

I intend to be a cantankerous old battleaxe, and I'll continue to refuse to play the game as long as I last. End of decision-making reminiscence.

Mike Gunderloy
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I enjoyed your
discussion of
life's turning
points. In ret-

spect, the two big ones for me were the decision to go to Caltech and the decision to get back into fan publishing after a few years of gafiation. The former led to my introduction to alternative culture, and to marriage; the latter to FACTSHEET FIVE. Neither was intended.

I've noted over the past decade or so that my predictions about my future career have always been wrong, and have become wrong in far shorter time than I would have imagined. I was going to be a chemical engineer when I first went to Caltech; inability to hack the introductory Chem E course took care of that notion. Then I was going to be a

chemist; discovering wine, women and drugs (I've never been able to sing worth a damn) scuttled that idea.

Then for a while it looked like our little group of Caltech dropouts was going to form a stable commune. We even talked about raising kids together and buying a house to share. Interpersonal conflicts made this impossible, and I went east with Carolyn (or more precisely, following Carolyn, my future wife) to get away from the flak.

When I first went back to school I figured industrial engineering was the way to go; I could use some engineering skills and work up to management. But working at co-op IE jobs I realized that this was not exactly socially useful work.

Then I hurriedly added a computer science minor, so I could at least work at something interesting. I've never used this degree for anything.

I switched over to a fuzzier program at RPI, the Science and Technology Studies program, with the idea that my politics could be merged with my engineering background. I remember my application talking about coming up with way to get workers more involved and build more useful products.

But then, when I got to RPI, I got less interested in the political aspects of the degree and more interested in the historical ones. So now I have another degree I'm not using.

Meanwhile there was **FACTSHEET FIVE**. This really was just a goddamned hobby when it started: a two-page ditto crud-zine. But it seems to have filled a market niche. When it got up around 1,000 circulation, I started to think of taking it full-time, and I dropped out of school to invest it. I'm still on my way to being a minor publishing magnate--but, based on my past experience, anything can happen.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that I feel somewhat buffeted by fate, but not much. What's really made the difference with me (though it may not show in the above account) has been my evolving political and social ideas.

I keep finding things wrong with assumptions that have guided my choices in life, and so I make new choices. The choices are there to be made.

I may have wasted a lot of time getting from age 19 to age 30, but it's sure been an interesting journey.

Roy Lavender
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90804

There are many
shooting sports
that do not in-
volve killing deer.
I admit to a fond-

ness for puncturing innocent tin cans, though the current crop tend to be aluminum. Sometimes I even break over and punch holes in paper. With the aluminum soft drink cans, the holes do not reduce the refund value. Isn't progress wonderful?

As for those who do hunt deer, why not? It's not fair, the deer can't shoot back? I'm sorry if a Bambi syndrome gets in the way. I mentioned in my Yule letter about deer returning to the Midwest. To the extent that where a cornfield lies next to a woods, the farmer will have considerable damage to the crop. So far, the other predators, like wolves, haven't had the same resurgence, it is up to the farmers and hunters to keep the balance. Where is the difference between a cow and a deer when it comes to converting corn to meat? Are you a vegetarian? Or are you considering investing in corn futures?

{Nope, I'm a carnivore, and I love venison. I didn't say deer hunting is EVIL, just that I don't consider it a "sport."}

The point is not hunting or gun ownership, but my rights to do either. The defiant bastards who wrote the Constitution knew very well that rulers prefer ruling serfs who cannot fight back. It still applies. And where does any politician get off declaring that I must be unarmed so a burglar won't be hurt in the pursuit of his trade?

The ancient Hawaiian kings had an incredibly simple penal system. They simply marked out a place where they wanted a stone wall built. The instructions were equally simple: "Build that wall by such and such a date or my guards will run spears through you."

We now have a prosperous industry based on keeping criminals from building stone walls.

What's wrong with fencing in a patch of wasteland and storing criminals. Don't you care for the name, concentration camp? Change the name if you like. Call it reorientation center, work therapy rehabilitation park. It's still a lot easier on the taxpayer than more

air conditioned prisons.

It would be even easier on the taxpayer if the criminals had to raise their own food or go hungry. But that would cut into some supplier's little gold mine, wouldn't it?

As you may have guessed by now, I tend to agree with Lazarus Long.

Education... I'm not sure I have a definition. I have some pieces of paper that say I received one. But then, I was of Dr. Loudenmilk's guinea pigs when he was developing what was in those days called an IQ test. When the test was given at Willis High, I was way off scale. I finished the two-hour test in under a half hour and had all the answers. And that experience biased my viewpoint on testing the quality of efforts to transfer information to the offspring to allow them to survive.

I read everything printing on it before I started to school. I was a natural speed reader and would read the assignment after entering class, while the teacher was getting the class quieted down. Then I would parrot the material back to the teacher and get good grades. I literally didn't take a book home to study. I didn't learn to study while in grade school or high school. When I hit college, with \$2,700 in my pocket, the choice was cramming a four-year course into 27 months, or going back to farming. I studied. I didn't sleep much or go to many parties. And they handed me that critical piece of paper that said I had a BS in Radio Engineering. (That was before they started calling it electronics.)

My 'education' started with my first job--doodlebugging. Some people call it seismic prospecting for oil. We didn't.

As a graduate radio engineer, I got to carry a 95-pound field radio on my back through Louisiana marsh. By the time I went a hundred yards, I fell in 13 times, to the amusement of our Cajun helpers. And every time, that radio jumped right in with me. The temperature was about 40 F and there was a strong wind blowing. I was warmer working Greeley, Colo., in midwinter. I learned. Two months later, I could walk on the marsh all day and not get my feet wet. Later, in basic training, a full field pack didn't seem all that heavy, but my viewpoint on having it on my back was much the same.

When the Army gave me that other im-

portant piece of paper and let me out, I went to work at Battelle Memorial Institute, a 'nonprofit' research foundation.

At the time, 1,800 employees included 800 Ph.D.s. Every joke you ever heard about Phudniks (Nudnik with a Ph.D.) is true. Janitors would pass in the hall, tip their hats to each other and say, "Good morning, Doctor."

However, there were those who got there the hard way. Among other things, together we assembled the first electron microscope that RCA sold. The pieces came packed in straw in crates, with no instruction book.

We got it together and working. We promptly discovered that the moving mass of steel in the elevator on the other side of the wall had a magnetic field that defocused the electron beam. So we took it apart and put it together on the far side of the lab.

Six months later, Bill Durette became the first field rep for RCA electron microscopes. He came to BMI to find out how to put one together. And he was a science fiction fan.

After BMI came Curtis Wright and an advanced design group (trying to figure out how to duplicate the V-2 rocket.) That branched into inertial guidance systems. When CW folded we had four different inertial guidance systems flying. The last one was strap down and accurate to + or - one half mile in 10,000. Curtis Wright died in a stock manipulation and I spent a couple of years as production engineer at Ranco (car heating controls for the Ford Magic Air heater and the Nash Weather Eye and every other fresh air heater in any car in the world.

North American Aviation took over the CW plant at the same time Ranco Management was taken over by the cousins of the founder. I shifted. My entire engineering crew came the next week. Someone found out I had drafting and descriptive geometry. That made me an instant Master Layout, Lead man, with a half dozen men right off the street to teach the trade of master layout. That was followed by a shift to design engineer in the fuselage group, forming the wind tunnel model design group (I was a one-man group for several months.)

Then we got our own model shop and wind tunnel. They moved me to the tunnel as soon as there was a door to

shut. No heat, winter time, and the tunnel was not yet built. Dealing with three different steel erecting unions can be educational too.

Then came a transfer to the West Coast and the Apollo Project. Working with NASA management plus NAA/Rockwell management is another sort of education. Luckily, by the time Apollo was complete, I was able to move to the unmanned spacecraft world and stay there, designing small satellites until my retirement. The boss was a fan.

Notice, in my entire career, the only times I came close to "Radio Engineer" was the time I lugged a field radio in the swamp, the radio part of my training as a communications chief in Combat Engineers, an automatic vacuum system control and a few other small instruments at Battelle, building hi-fi systems at home and moonlighting the design of a couple of recording studios after we moved west. The balance of the many job titles I have had referred to mechanical engineering.

Engineers are interchangeable. That piece of paper opened doors. When I was handed a new job that I knew nothing about, my first action was always to read the description. What is the job going to accomplish. No matter what it is about, there is some small part of it you can do. By the time you have that done, you will know more about the job and can do some other part. When you get really stuck, go to the high priced help.

Why did I do it? I'm not real sure. A few good teachers pushed me toward science. I escaped English grammar by taking Dramatics, which led directly to working with the stage crew.

With two 35mm and two 16mm sound projectors and the only good stage in town, the stage crew served a varied clientele. High school, college, local merchants and even local stag parties.

Very educational. And very different from sitting on the front of a hay wagon looking at the end of a Percheron.

Driving the hay wagon with eyes and nose running, to put up hay for the horses to eat during the winter so we could do it all again next year... that may have influenced me.

If there was a single moment when I decided I was not going to farm, it was one of the times I was driving a team pulling the manure spreader. The man-

ure had been mellowing all winter in the barn lot. By spring, corn stalks are well soaked and utterly limp. They have a tendency to cling to the rotating drum at the rear of the spreader and not release until they have turned through 180 degrees. There's something about one of them hitting the back of your neck and wrapping around that can influence decisions.

Current educational standards? Are there any? My son in law is a professor of mechanical engineering. When he was new at his current university (and low on the totem pole) he was given a bunch of post grad mechanical engineering students to monitor. To find out what he had to deal with, he asked them to make a drawing of an object of their choice that could be taken to a shop to have it made.

I was visiting and he asked me to look over these drawings. There was one that you could tell what the student had in mind without reading the title block. Most left out a title block. The post grad mechanical engineering students could neither read nor produce a blueprint.

I heard one of them say, "Oh, I'll just use the CAD system if I have to make a drawing."

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Many thanks for
DoS 56, with its
weirdly disturbing
letter column. One
person advocates

herding criminals into vast open-air pens and leaving them to kill each other off; another complains that assault rifles are not fully automatic; a third suggests that education should be withdrawn from so-called "slum kids"...

If there were ever a demonstration of the gulf between our two English-speaking cultures (and sometimes the language isn't shared either), then this must be it. Perhaps it's all to do with the rugged frontier mentality, or something--we don't need no steenking beeg government and its namby-pamby solutions! Let evolution take its natural course and kill off all the liberal faggot commie-sympy, or whatever the current preferred term of abuse may be in certain parts of the midwest. No wonder people such as myself, brought up in the intellectual European tradition, tend to arch our eyebrows in surprise, shudder discreetly and pass

swiftly by on the other side!

In 1976, the UN reported that the money required to provide adequate water, food health, housing, education and sanitation for everyone in the world would total \$17 billion a year--or about as much as the world spent on armaments every two weeks. How much worse must things be now, 13 years later? But although pessimism may dominate our intellects, we must maintain an optimism of the will and remember that although we can do little on our own, together we are powerful. The military may seem to be in charge now, but for how much longer? The political situation here in Europe is changing almost faster than we can keep up. If, in January 1989, anyone had predicted that by the end of the year, Solidarnosc would have been elected to government in Poland, that the Berlin Wall would have been dismantled, and mass popular protest would have ended communist one-party rule in Czechoslovakia and East Germany, they would have been dismissed as a raving lunatic--but now we accept this as the natural outcome of the ending of the Cold War and the start of the reconstruction of our shared European heritage. As I write, NATO defence ministers are about to meet in Brussels to agonise over how to meet this sudden new challenge from the East; essentially to ask themselves how, with the sudden absence of an enemy in which their publics can believe, they can resist the growing calls for real disarmament. Astonishingly, the U.S. military looks as though it may be about the lead the way here--albeit in an attempt to head off gargantuan U.S. fiscal deficit demands some cuts anyway--but one cannot help but applaud. By the end of the century, the European political landscape will have changed out of all recognition, and those born during the next decade will probably grow up wondering how anyone could have believed in "the Soviet threat" or thought that American troops were necessary to "defend" Western Europe against it. Verily, these are exciting times in which to be alive!

Mike Glicksohn
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Good luck on
using DoS as
of your business. I'm sure
I've told you

that I used ENERGUMEN as a business for

one year and received a substantial tax rebate thanks to the losses I incurred publishing it. I also declared my income as a "science fiction personality" one year (two articles sold and a paid radio interview) and wrote off a few convention trips and hotel bills against the profit, incurring another loss, of course, and saving a few tax bucks. You're far more legitimate than I'd be at this time so I see no reason it shouldn't work for you. And don't worry, I won't buy any of your bound galleys at those prices who could afford to? and inadvertently thrust you into the black side of the ledger.

I'm always fascinated by your accounts of your personal life and your speculations on how things might have gone differently, at least in part because I can't/don't write the same way in my own fanzines and because I just don't have either the introspective nature or the memory of my earlier days to indulge myself in the sort of speculation that obviously fascinates you and your readers. Offhand I can think of three turning points in my life: the decision of my father to emigrate to Canada, my discovering that I liked the taste of alcohol, and my attending TRI-CON in 1966 and hence entering fandom. Those three events undoubtedly shaped the life I've led and have resulted in my being where I am (and what I am) today. And yet even once I identify those vital crossroads I really can't even begin to wonder what my life would have been like if any of them had not taken place. I tend to believe that our essential natures are immutable and circumstances would probably have brought me to more less the same spot I currently occupy whether my life had followed the specific path it did or not. And even if I'm wrong about that I lack the ability to see myself living any other sort of life. Oh, I can blithely say, "Well, we stayed in England, I went to Cambridge, became a quantum chemist and a world class bridge player and ended up publishing a newsletter for wine connoisseurs" but deep down I know I'm a fannish fan who drinks too much, loves fanzines and enjoys loccing them and all in all I'm rather glad that circumstances led me to my destiny. But thanks for your essay, anyway!

(I suppose the other side of this speculative coin is that we did what we

did and is there any point in wondering what might have happened otherwise? Perhaps that seems antithetical to the usual fannish viewpoint but assuming that we all make our important decisions carefully it would seem to me that delayed soul-searching is at best counter-productive. As Popeye was wont to say: I yam what I yam. I tend to think he's underrated as a philosopher.)

Two things strike me about your list of fanzines. First is that I haven't heard of most of them. Second is that we agree on the excellence of Bruce Schneier's writing. I've been futilely trying to convince Bruce for years that what he does in a fanzine: perhaps your comments will help tip the scales.

The letters from your offspring do you proud. Even if Claudia hates football just because of high school pep rallies. (At least she acknowledges the lack of logic in her reaction.) The highest compliment I can pay them (and you) is to say their letters made me hope that I meet them someday. It'll probably never happen but at least I can proudly say I knew their parents!

I enjoyed the various discussions on education in the lettercolumn but I've already had my say on the matter. I also thank you for putting me in touch with Pavel. I sent him a couple of sf books as a result of your last issue and we've exchanged a couple of letters since. Perhaps all knowledge really is contained in fanzines after all.

The letter from Algernon Stewart was somewhat of a mind-blower. I'm glad to see that whatever other changes have occurred in his life he's still interested in good communication in good fanzines and hope to hear more from him in future issues of DoS. Best of luck to him, though, whatever happens.

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Your ruminations on "what if" you had made different choices in your life was fascinating. Personally, I had three essential choices, all of which I agonized over. The first was a choice of a college, the second a determination of a major, and the third my choice of graduate school. (Actually the choice of graduate school turned out to be relatively easy. It was the only one to offer me an assistantship.) Unlike you, these were never obvious choices for me. Otherwise, like you,

the choices seemed to make themselves, i.e. where my parents determined my high school, etc.

Mike Glicksohn's anecdote about the student who never heard of apartheid reminds me of an incident in my office. Our chairman of the board was running for governor of Mississippi in 1987. One of the issues he was trying to make was that his opponent was accepting PAC money. During the campaign one of my co-workers, holding an MBA degree, asked me, "What's a PAC?" I then had to go into a long explanation of what a political action committee is.

In my letter in your last issue, I criticized my alma mater. Cathy Howard's letter indicated, however, that it had some things going for it. Unlike her college, piano lessons could be taken for credit, and a course in musical composition would definitely have satisfied a fine arts requirement. A course in reading music, though, is more appropriate to an elementary school curriculum than a college one.

Buck Coulson's comment on the first Star Trek movie makes me feel better. No one has ever taken me seriously when I try to explain the sexual imagery of the starship Enterprise penetrating the cloud surrounding V'Ger.

The theory that American ignorance of the remainder of the world is a correlation of America's stature in the world does not strike me as plausible. Although I have no personal experience, my reading of 19th and early 20th century American writers indicates to me that Americans were just as ignorant 100 years ago. H.L. Mencken is an extreme case, but Sinclair Lewis and Mark Twain also paint an unflattering picture of the "average" American. For instance, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn were hardly knowledgeable in geography outside the U.S.

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Every decision, i.e. turning point, in our lives always affects others and others influence the decisions we make. I can hear the wheels of If spinning; I can see where God should have a plan; and, in the end I think free will will win.

I've wondered many times what my life would be like if various choices were not forced on me by (a) parents (b) my own stupidity or (c) love. Strange

bunch of ideas.

(A) I started working after school delivering papers and groceries to help pay for clothes, books (SF of course), and spending money. Nothing bad turned out here. I have a strong work ethic and work a second job just to have a little extra money.... I attended college for two years after high school to please my parents. English major, no less. I was not ready for school, so my grades were mediocre at best.

(B) Then I dropped out, joined the Army, got married and went to Vietnam to do my patriotic duty. No details other than I grew up fast and now seem to have a low tolerance for politicians and the value of human life, and a high tolerance for drugs and alcohol. (Two habits now broken for many years.)

I've had many jobs from computer sales, soft drink and bread deliveryman, truck driver and now purchasing agent. I've gained degrees in data processing and business administration but do not use them. Reading people and product knowledge are my tools of trade now.

(C) Married for 21 years this month, by the skin of my teeth. I've been separated for over a year and we are just now getting back together. All my fault -- thought one woman wasn't enough.

Our first child died shortly after birth and we tried hard to get Scott, now 13, into the world. That was a major turning point.

Others that come to mind: Should I have finished school? What about an Army career? What if our first child had lived? Why did I call my boss an s.o.b. and lose a good-paying job? How can I be happy making \$20,000 when I know what \$35,000 can do for me? What if the affair had never happened?

I'd never thought of using BARYON as a self-employment idea. I don't have any income from it. I'm happy just to receive the books it brings in to keep my reading costs down. I still buy a ton of books: Stephen King, Clive Barker and the books I get from England do not come cheap. The writing I've tried to sell is best left in the closet.

BARYON has paid me back with getting to meet several of my favorite authors, a nice collection of autographs, and a fluttery feeling when I see a quote on the back of a book or get a letter from an author who doesn't write letters to fanzines.

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INRI was really the Jewish/Roman Internal Revenue Service.... Jesus did give all of his goods to the poor, but that didn't excuse him from filling out his tax form...even though in his case there was no money to give to Caesar--and the govt. treated him accordingly. Subsequent Christians have tended to obfuscate in this area and pretend that it meant King of the Jews or King of the Wild Frontier or some such damn nonsense. But then what do Christians understand? Certainly not why the Jews didn't take Jesus for their Messiah [as if Jesus kicked the Romans out of Jerusalem, which is what the Jews were looking for at the time. But then Jews today refuse to recognize Adolf Hitler as their Messiah-God working in his strange & wonderful way.... Without Adolf the Limeys would still be in control of the promised land, despite the Balfour Declaration.] But enough world history. I want to say a bit about personal history.

I don't know (though I have the free will to accept determinism, but not vice versa--but let's not get into that either) if I could have done anything in life differently than I did. Or even if I could have taken what did happen differently. But I tend to think that it doesn't much matter what happens to one in life--it's all grist for an internal mill...and that what matters is trying to change how we take things in. That the major opportunity in life is not whether I took Road A or Road B when I had the chance--but how I internally took whichever road I ended up taking.

What I do know is that I have no more ability to plot out my life than I do my novels (you can imagine from that just how wonderful they must be to read). But that's me--having to make the best of what happens in this best of all possible worlds. Others may do it different.

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I do not believe in God per se--certainly not the God of organized religion--but I do believe in predestination. Have for a long time. That belief was sorely

tested a few years back but is still intact.

I can't remember, but according to my mother, I started talking about wanting a farm when I was 4 years old. I would sometimes come up with other things--including being a writer--but I always came back to being a farmer. Well, of course poor folks do not go out and buy farms.

When I was 16 I decided I was going to Agriculture college. Folks had no money so I worked and put myself through two years of college. When I graduated, I obtained a decent job at MacDonald College, near Montreal, working with poultry. I was happy. After a short spell, I left. Main reason was that father supposedly had a farm lined up to buy, was in the process of doing so and I was to operate it. Time I got home, no farm. Never had been. Well, that wasn't the first time--nor the last--that father screwed me up.

I sort of stumbled around for a while. I was in Alberta during the height of the oil boom but instead of going out to the fields and making some dollars, I worked on a farm for cents.

Somewhere along here, I made a conscious, carefully considered decision that I would concentrate what energy and finances I could muster to somehow obtaining a farm. And forgo some of the more pleasant things in life, like dating and sex. Now, in my 40s, I regret that decision at times. Well, I did get a farm of sorts. Not much fun, though.

After a few years, we found a farm, albeit one which was run down and run out. I had great plans to restore this place to prosperity. Things were going reasonably well, all things considered. Father and I were partners; we had losses, which was to be expected. Along came Revenue Canada, our version of the IRA--er, IRS. Couple of differences in my dispute and yours: they want you to make your hobby a business; they declared my business a hobby. Your final bill was in the low hundreds; mine was just over \$11,000.

I went through a stretch where everything went wrong. Cattle were dying like flies; machinery breaking.... I almost broke. My faith in predestination was badly shaken. I often found myself looking skyward and saying: "If this is a sign that I am not supposed to be doing this, give me some sign

towards what I should do." I said I don't believe in God. I do believe in one Supreme Being, who has total control over everyone and everything. I came extremely close to packing it in. But, do you give up on something you have wanted for 35 years? Especially when I do not and did not know what else to do. And, I got no signs. I still believe I am supposed to be here and doing a bit of farming. Possibly because that is what I wish to do. I am looking for some way to make some money besides going out and doing work I dislike, under the control of idiots.

A few years back, I became an employee of the forestry industry. It has some good points--a certain amount of freedom... I became quite good at it, proving the lie to the bromide that you cannot be good at something you dislike. The other day I spent \$50 to send for a manual which is supposed to tell me how to get paid for reading books. Reading is one of my great hobbies; it would be great to be able to earn a living from doing so. I ain't expecting much. Likely \$50 down the drain. I made the decision. Was it totally me? Part of the master plan? A move helped along by the asinine actions of management?

Is there a force which inspired me to write to you, that made you send me copies of DON-o-SAUR and then made me write this? And, if this is all part of a plan, will you then be instrumental in getting me into the business of reading for pay--or something else? Either personally or because you print this and someone reads it and... Who knows? I don't have a clue. Do you?

{Don't look to me for answers to the Ultimate Questions. I got none. But I am constantly fascinated by the different ways different people have of looking at things. If I believed in predestination, I would consider myself relieved of responsibility to work at whatever I was predestined for.}

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On the subject of roads not taken: Everyone has a favorite alternate history worked out for himself. One of mine allows me to have stayed longer in

Denver, long enough to have spent more time with Suzanne Carnival. And Leigh Brackett. And Cynthia Felice. And Ed Bryant. And Fred Pohl. And yourself... and especially with another lady named Susan for whom I have a special fondness even after all these years. But I have a good life, and like most people who would enjoy a brief or prolonged sojourn in Shadow to recapture an erotic moment which may or may not have taken place, I should never allow myself to lose sight of how good I have it now in my own personal Amber. I have a wife, two children, house, land, gadgets, job, education, self-respect, respect of/for others... a lot. I worked hard for it, too, and have the satisfaction of knowing I made my own way, with God's help--and without kissing God's ass or anybody's in Indiana.

Back in Indiana, I used to live across the street from a girl named Diana Oldham. When I was 6 and she was 7 she and I were sort of going together, and once in a while she and some of the other neighborhood girls would offer a fellow the opportunity to have a look at something we hadn't seen before, behind the garage if it was warm outside, or in her bedroom while her parents weren't at home. I was too scared, or too embarrassed about not knowing what to say or do, or both, to do myself any good when I was 8 or 9. I can't think of a reason why I would like to be a 44-year-old man in a 9-year-old body attempting to have a relationship with a 10-year-old girl. Of course I DO know some who would.

I don't think most of us could cope with the past. I've very well adjusted to my role in the '90s. I do the '90s a lot better than I did the '50s. But if I had to do the '50s over again, knowing what I know now, there is a strong possibility that any change I'd make in my past would prove to be a change for the worse. When I went back to a high school reunion in Crawfordsville several years ago, I discovered to my amazement that, despite my own very negative view of myself, other members of the class of '63 remembered me as warm, friendly, outgoing, intelligent, good looking and even popular! Boy, was I ever shocked!

We really don't know ourselves well enough. We don't need to change our pasts; we need to work on our presents.

(In my own case, I need to work on

wrapping Christmas presents, so I'll cut this short.)

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Just a sequel
to my loc in DoS
56. It may have
occurred to you
when your read my

last letter; it didn't occur to me until most of a semester had gone by at DePaul University. I had written this windy letter about people specializing in what they learned, and presumed to lecture about the motivations behind obtaining an education (i.e. what it can get you vs. what it can do for you) but in the same letter I proudly announced that I had matriculated at a theatre conservatory! There I was, doing the very thing I was criticizing; choosing my college with my career 100% in mind, and nothing of my spiritual or intellectual development. I find it most embarrassing.

More important, however, was the fact that I became singularly bored with myself there. So, once the semester was over, I packed my duffel and installed myself here at the Eugene Lang College in Greenwich Village--where I feel I may be in my element at last. It's a strange little place, which asks remarkably little of its students: simply that they learn. Its academic philosophy more or less rhymes with what I wrote in the body of my last letter.

The questions you raise this issue about turning points are not really for this correspondent to answer, him being at just the age that others reflect on. My conception of time, however, does not regard the existence of multiple paths: I think the past, present and future are all one. I don't remember ever deciding to be an actor; but I have wanted to be one, and have been one, for long enough that I honestly don't remember wanting to be anything else in my childhood. And the fact that wanting to become an adult before immersing myself in a conservatory may as well have been destined. It happened, it always has happened, but at another angle, it hasn't happened yet. But it will. Time is a funny business. And now that I think about it some more, I don't think destiny is the right word. I don't believe in any scheme of things; simply that time and all it contains (which I suppose is my personal definition of infinity) lays

like a roadbed. Which is why stories about time travellers changing the course of history don't impress me much: that very action exists in the course of time, and the change is as significant as a sub-routine in a computer program.

Your letter column continues to be absorbing (absorbent? I'm not sure -- let me spill some tea over the first page...) and as DON-o-SAUR achieves semi-semi-prozine status, I shall wish you...moderate success, per your wishes. And good gracious, but your letter column is absorbent! DON-o-SAUR is the new quicker-picker-upper!

Tom Jackson
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I wish you good luck with your book business, but I'm not likely to become one of your customers -- I can't afford to become interested in costly collectibles. It's all I can manage to acquire cheap texts for reading.

I thought it was interesting when you described how other people's decisions had affected the course your own life took. I've spent most of my career in journalism in Lawton, but it isn't because I had any burning desire to live here, or even knew much about the place. I remember I was working as usual at the student newspaper at the University of Oklahoma when the professor who was our supervisor asked how I would like to work in Lawton. It seemed the newspaper had a vacancy and has asked the journalism department to recommend someone, and I was the candidate. I interviewed at some other places but it was Lawton that wanted me and hired me. After several years in Lawton I went to work in Tulsa but lost my job there after about a year. I needed another job pretty badly--my ex-wife was pregnant--and I applied at several places, but Lawton took me back before I got any offers from anywhere else. So here I am...

Harry Andruschak apparently did not read the local papers very carefully during his stint at the postal training center in Norman. The university whose officials tried to prevent the showing of "The Last Temptation of Christ" on campus was Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, not (as Harry says) the University of Oklahoma in Norman. In any case, the film was shown in Stillwater after a delay -- a lawsuit was

filed, and the judge told the OSU officials they couldn't ban it.

Steven B. Fellows I am fairly new to fandom, getting into it about a year ago. I have been reading SF since I was about 10 or 11. The earliest SF story I remember reading is Rocket Ship Galileo by Heinlein, and of course the Tom Swift stories. In the past year I have read a few fanzines and I have enjoyed many of them. I really liked yours and I am looking forward to the next issue.

You asked an interesting question: What is education for? My immediate answer is survival. Not just the mere successful continued existence of life but the continuation of a civilized society. Then comes the satisfaction of the individual. Many people continue to be students for their whole lives, because they desire to know about their world.

At some point in a child's life he or she must discover that desire to learn, which is also part of education. I have noticed that many people never achieve that desire and do not continue with school after high school. I do not feel any sorrow for those people because that is their choice. Lately, however, many more students want to continue with a more advanced education so they can get better jobs and, more important, make a better life for themselves. I hope that as more people are educated to live in a more advanced part of society they can maybe learn how to cope with others different from themselves.

As an undergraduate I attended Cornell University. There, I had many friends from overseas; a lot of them from the Middle East. I learned about their culture as they learned about ours. There was no attempt to assimilate one person into another's culture, but a desire to learn about the other cultures in order to understand how they felt and thought about issues. I bring this up because in our past (that of the Western European culture) we have been very intolerant of other cultures. Either these "aliens" were taught our customs or killed, usually the latter. We can recall the three G's of the Spanish and Portuguese explorers: God, Glory and Gold.

I still see (as I am sure all of us can) this attitude prevailing among

American culture as among that of many other nations. This is becoming especially vital to overcome with the new openness of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc nations. The past few months have seen the move towards a free society and a capitalist system for the Eastern Bloc nations. I hope that Americans realize that these people do not want to adopt our customs or attitudes. While they might look to the U.S. to set an example and hope to adopt a similar political and economic system, we cannot forget that they have a rich and varied past different from ours. They have no desire to give up their native customs.

I have heard many people joke about liberal arts educations and attending large and snobbish universities. But the most important thing I learned is that not only can I tolerate other customs but I am interested in learning as much about them as possible and that I enjoy exploring new aspects of human society with my "foreign" friends.

A major theme in science fiction is the exploration and understanding of alien cultures. This is one of the major reasons I like to read SF. And these thoughtful discussions that fanzines like yours bring up are also very enjoyable, as I am now learning.

Michael W. Waite
105 W. Ainsworth
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

You have an exceptionally good locating fanzine (#56) this quarter. I expect your next issue to be bound in leather, signed and numbered!

I am enclosing a check in the amount of \$8. Keep those Don-o-Saurs coming.

Your candor is refreshing. "American Educations" is a cathartic masterpiece. (#55). Well, maybe not quite a masterpiece, but certainly an impressive piece of writing.

The LoCs from Pavel Gregoric Jr. and Berislav Pinjuh give one pause to contemplate the state of education in the U.S. There most certainly is a gap in my education when it comes to foreign affairs, and my knowledge of Yugoslavia is very limited.

Marshal Tito, Mother Teresa and Svetozar Gligoric are three names that come to mind when I think of Yugoslavia. I suspect most Americans are unfamiliar with the name Svetozar Glig-

oric. But I am a practitioner of chess, and Gligoric is one of my heroes. He is an International Grandmaster in the truest sense of the title and oft time winner of the Yugoslav chess championship--as well as a good friend of Bobby Fischer. I remember reading in Chess Life and Review that Svetozar cried when Fischer resigned his world chess title. Fischer's resignation was a great loss to the world of chess--regardless of what one might think of his personal behavior--and the art and knowledge he could have brought to that game has been lost forever. Svetozar Gligoric understood this and has thus secured his place in my Hall of Fame.

The comparative study of religions has always been an interest of mine, although I am skeptical of all religions (organized or not). I often have flashbacks to my Catholic youth -- a more impressionable age--when I readily accepted the teachings of the church without question. One should always question authority.

There is a positive side to all this religion business. I will always be grateful to the church for supplying me with an endless array of symbols and traditions that I can readily adapt to my photography. These symbols and traditions ultimately contributed to the successful completion of my graduate studies in Fine Arts (MFA).

Richard A. Dengrove
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You can't beat 'em. Only if kids know there is a job for studying math and English hard will they study them hard. And they don't know, so they don't study them hard. In fact, some students know so little of the workaday world they believe it's easy to become rock stars. To them, being a rock star doesn't take any math, English, science --or brains.

Thus, you gotta join 'em--supposing you want increased learning in school. And we don't have to invent a practical education to join 'em either. They teach such an education in the Orient. Often if Japanese high school students can graduate, there is a job waiting for them. Also the courses themselves in the Orient are ultra practical. A friend claims a relative of his in Hong Kong never heard of dinosaurs. When he

whether it breathed fire. His teachers were busy teaching him business math.

Yes, I realize this plan wouldn't go down with most of us fans. We pride ourselves on being a little impractical. We like ideas, we like faraway places, we like different eras besides our own. Current education, if it hasn't been too denuded of controversy, emotion and quirks, is our cup of tea.

Maybe education can be tailored to some extent to the pupil. Some learn better with a job motivation, some an intellectual motivation, some an artistic motivation. Traditionally people have argued we must teach everyone the same way. In the age of the assembly line, that made sense: it sounded like efficiency. But in this age of automation, of computers and programs for every type and purpose, it doesn't seem so clear.

About the letters, I didn't realize there were so many law 'n' order fans. Finally, I'd like to thank Sheryl Birkhead for her comments on my views of fat.

Tom Digby
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I too was educated as an engineer. I design fairly simple electronic circuits and write programs for the simple computer that we build into our products, but I seldom use the more esoteric stuff. It has, however, colored my everyday thinking. Whenever someone mentions their belief that cost-of-living indexing of wages increases inflation, for example, I think of how the economy could be modeled as an amplifier circuit and how having some wages automatically indexed changes the system's characteristics.

And when I noticed people tending to call me "Digby" instead of "Tom" I thought of it in terms of Shannon's classic theory about how unusual messages carry effectively more information than common ones of the same length, even worked through some of the math on it.

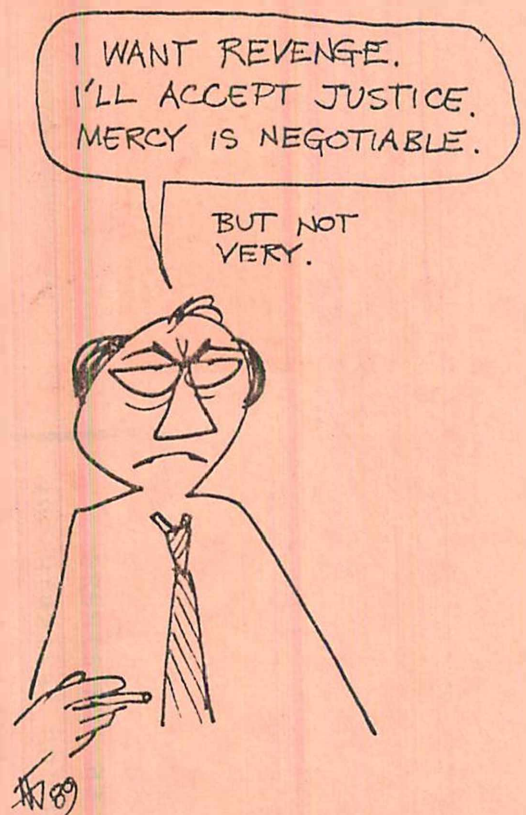
And on the way home from seeing the

first Star Wars movie, I figured out how much energy it would take to blow up an Earth-like planet the way the did Aldebaran. It came to several million tons of $E=MC^2$. For comparison, a large electric generating plant has an output measured in milligrams per minute.

So maybe another question is whether I'm unusual in this or whether most engineers, or most fans, or most fan-nish engineers, tend to think this way.

Also heard from:

Sheryl Birkhead, Robert Bloch, Ralph Collins, Ian Covell, Janet Fox, Wayne Hooks, Fred Jacobcic (barely in time to be listed!), Judy Tockman Lazar, Steve Larue, Hank Roll, John Thiel, Danny Joe Thompson.



(Teddy Harvia)

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